

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

ЧИТАТЕЛЯМ «АНГЛО-СОВЕТСКОГО ЖУРНАЛА»

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С искренним уважением,
В. НИКОЛАЕВА-ТЕРЕШКОВА

TO READERS OF THE 'ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL'

Dear Friends,

With all my heart I greet the readers of the ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL. Sending you best regards on a glorious anniversary—the fortieth year of the foundation of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR—I wish you every success in your fine and important work directed to extending cultural links between our countries and strengthening friendship between the British and Soviet peoples.

VALENTINA NIKOLAEVA-TERESHKOVA.

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Editorial Committee : James Aldridge, Robert Browning, Dr. L. Crome,
A. G. Morton, Andrew Rothstein, Prof. J. S. Spink.

Editorial Office : 118 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1. Tel. EUSton 3713

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SHAKESPEARE ON THE SOVIET STAGE

G. Boyadzhiev

The author of this article, which was specially written for the 'Anglo-Soviet Journal', was a member of the Soviet tourist group that visited Britain in April under the auspices of the Society for Cultural Relations for the Shakespeare quatercentenary celebrations.

HAVING ENDURED for four centuries, Shakespeare now enters the fifth and greatest century of his glory. Since ancient times the power of genius has been measured by the flowing waters of Lethe; Shakespeare's bark, having hoist sail, ploughs ever forward on the stormy waves of this river.

Dry statistical data eloquently testify to Shakespeare's popularity in the USSR and to the interest shown by Soviet audiences in his unsurpassed art. The USSR occupies first place in the world for translations of Shakespeare, and has published more than 220 editions of his works. Nine Shakespeare operas and ballets were given 771 performances in the USSR between 1959 and 1963 and seen by 758,000 people.*

Between 1957 and 1963 there were 6,522 performances of productions of twenty-one different Shakespearian plays before audiences totalling 3,922,300.

In the course of twelve theatrical seasons *Othello* was staged in eighty-eight theatres. The noble Moor trod the boards in Magadan in the far north, in the southern town of Sukhumi, in Mukachevo on the western border and in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in the east, in the capital of the USSR and the capitals of the Soviet republics, and in small district centres. Shakespeare's dark-complexioned hero visited such ancient cities as Samarkand, famed for Tamerlane's tomb, and Echmiadzin, the centre of the Armenian Gregorian Church; and very new cities built during Soviet power, like Komsomolsk-on-Amur and Magnitogorsk. Naturally, in each republic *Othello* spoke the language of the people before whom he appeared—alphabetically they are: Abkhazian (Sukhumi), Armenian (Erevan, Kirovakan, Echmiadzin), Avar (Buimaksk), Azerbaijani (Baku, Nakhichevan), Bashkir (Ufa), Estonian (Tallin), Georgian (Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Kutaisi), Kirghiz (Frunze), Korean (Taldy-Kurgan), Kumyk (Makhach-Kala), Lettish (Riga), Mari (Yoshkar-Ola), Ossetian (Ordjonikidze), Russian (in forty-eight towns), Tatar (Kazan), Turkmenian (Ashkhabad), Ukrainian (Kiev, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk, Sumi, Chernovtsy), Yakut (Yakutsk). *Othello* speaks in eighteen languages, *Hamlet* too; and *Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* and the other heroes of the twenty-one tragedies and comedies performed on the Soviet stage are many-tongued.

Indeed, boundless horizons opened up before Shakespeare from the very first years of the Revolution, while a limitless Shakespeare emerged before millions of spectators of different nationalities. Both the old poet and the new times had in fact to undergo a great examination: Shakespeare withstood the most difficult test of his centuries-old history—the test of the Revolution—while the audience of the new era proved their ideals and ethics by the greatest criteria of humanism. The genius and the epoch were equally matched. Shakespeare was now seen with unprecedented force: the innermost treasure-house of the ideas was laid bare, his prophecies were correctly understood, the

* The nine operas and ballets were: *Merry Wives of Windsor* (opera), two productions, nineteen performances; *Merry Wives of Windsor* (ballet), two productions, forty performances; *Othello* (ballet), two productions, 103 performances; *Othello* (opera), nine productions, 186 performances; *Romeo and Juliet* (ballet), six productions, ninety-eight performances; *Romeo and Juliet* (opera), four productions, 122 performances; *The Taming of the Shrew* (opera), seven productions, 181 performances; *Macbeth* (opera), one production, fourteen performances.

true aims and scope of his struggle explained. And all this was not simply the result of the efforts of scholars or the intuition of actors ; history itself played a part.

The famous inscription on Shakespeare's Globe Theatre—' All the world's a stage '—was seen from a new angle. The theatre encompassed the whole world—and this had to be seen through Shakespeare's poetry. So this titan, born in an epoch that ' needed titans ' (Engels), having crossed the great watershed of human history and entered the world that was building socialism, rose once again to his full stature. An even greater time had set in which, also needing titans, not only gave them birth but restored them to life. When we look at Shakespeare today we realise that mankind, having experienced a half-century of new history, has matured, and from its new position is able not only to appreciate far more profoundly and correctly what Shakespeare wrote but to give him new force and broaden his horizons. For great poetry not only nourishes great epochs, but is itself nourished by them.

Shakespeare's first response to the Revolution was guarded and uneasy ; he looked at it with the eyes of a Hamlet born of the thoughts and fantasies of Michael Chekhov ; this Hamlet was a genius with a troubled soul, the victim of an historic cataclysm. With a frank, questioning gaze, with the high, noble forehead of a Dostoevsky and with the purest of consciences, he seemed a lone wanderer from the past. . . . He cursed and detested this bygone world and peered at the new with keen interest and fear ; did Caliban now reign in Prospero's bright world ?

Michael Chekhov's Hamlet concentrated on the tragedy of the individual who, having isolated himself from the world, sought vainly for a solution within the framework of his own personality but could not find one. This was the tragedy of a man who could not live without truth, without goodness, without humanity, and who saw, fatally for himself, the destruction of all his hopes.

Behind Chekhov's Hamlet stood a personality of our time, with all the complexities, conflicts and truth of his spiritual life ; but this was not the man who made the Revolution, but the one who shut himself away from it, who, though wishing to understand it, did not comprehend the new age and came into fatal conflict with it.

Then another Hamlet appeared on the stage, created by an actor who had been directly involved in the struggle for the new life. This was Abrar Khidoyatov. From his photograph there gazes a well-proportioned, black-haired youth with a bold, courageous face. A long oriental dagger hangs from the belt of his close-fitting doublet. Hamlet armed not for suicide but for revenge !

This young Uzbek, who had emerged from the very heart of the people, saw the struggle with the *basmachi* Claudius and his world through the prism of contemporary class battles. His Hamlet was the same, and had to join the ranks of the fighters. Perhaps the artistic wholeness and logic of the character were violated, but this was the price paid for finding that wished-for power that Belinsky called ' virile harmony '. This harmony, it is true, so far still bore a primitive and elementary character—there was a singleness of purpose that overshadowed all the remaining complicated twists and turns of Hamlet's soul. But the first step in the search for an harmonious foundation had been taken. ' Hamlet the sniveller ', as it was coarsely expressed in a review, was finished with ; ' metal had been put ' into Hamlet's voice, and it rang ' with immense passion '. The power of Mochalov's monologues, it seemed, had been restored ; the outlines of the noble and passionate heroes of the Uzbek folk epic could be sensed. What might be termed a ' powerful Hamlet ' had been created.

Historically such an interpretation was legitimate ; what was not legitimate was something else—the vulgarisation of this idea, transforming Hamlet into an enterprising young man cunningly fighting for his lost throne. That Vakhtangov Theatre experiment remained an isolated one in our Shakespeariana, however, and did not jeopardise the idea of a ‘powerful’ Hamlet. However debatable this trend, it was the only way that the first rapprochement between Shakespeare and the new socialist reality could be accomplished.

While not turning from this path, the process of understanding Shakespeare went deeper. We recall Hamlet as played on the Armenian stage by Vagarsh Vagarshyan. This actor revealed the essence of his hero’s good and noble soul. The evil that had been done stunned him, but did not inflict a mortal wound. This Hamlet was not filled with the spirit of revenge ; reason, not wilfulness, was the predominant quality of his nature. But this reason, for all its intellectual fervour, had no place for the personal shock, for the dulling of consciousness, for sorrow and grief both for himself and mankind. Vagarshyan’s Hamlet was inspired by his self-imposed mission ; it was as if he was assembling evidence against the world of evil.

The clear, penetrating, fearless mind of Hamlet triumphed, justice triumphed, and a further step in the new understanding of Shakespeare had been taken. But again not without loss, for this new approach seemed to lack confidence in its own ability to lay bare the secrets of the real ideas and living personality of Hamlet, and so set its own specific imprint on his character. Yet it was capable of creating a Shakespearian image which, having emerged without any prompting or correction, could by itself enter the great new epoch.

Then Ostuzhev played Othello, and the world history of Shakespeare entered a new phase ; this took place almost 100 years after Mochalov’s triumph—and once again on the stage of the Moscow Maly Theatre. Ostuzhev completely revolutionised the interpretation of the Venetian Moor. He tore himself loose from the confined sphere of the personal sufferings of Othello and saw him as Shakespeare had depicted him—as a man who expressed a majestic belief in people, whose love was pure and noble, as a man who had known great happiness because he possessed an inner harmony and who suffered intensely when he lost it. The whole ethical conception of the role was decisively altered ; from the realm of the purely personal, subjective experience, the tragic entered the realm of intensive suffering and an inhumanly difficult struggle for an ideal. The conflict shifted from the subjective world of the hero to the objective one of struggle with the enemies of his ideal. And so the very picture of Othello’s inner conflict altered, and was seen as an intense, agonising clash between the harmonious essence of his nature and what was disrupting it.

The actor’s contemporary association of ideas penetrated the classical image, which, while remaining Shakespearian, took on the scale and power of the people’s eternal struggle for the humanistic ideal ; it became a symbol of the reality of victory for popular justice and for the popular attitude to life and people.

Ostuzhev’s Othello was not merely a personal artistic triumph for the actor ; the birth of a new type of Shakespearian tragedy, the determining element of which was its harmonious basis, could also be observed with special clarity. This was as it should be, for it was the philosophical and æsthetic image that melody of its speech, and in the plastic perfection and beauty of its movement. This was as it should be, for it was the philosophical and æsthetic image that predominated and not the usual emotional aspect. Ostuzhev’s Othello was a poet, a thinker, a moralist, and only then a warrior. In his white robes, with his head held high, he was majestic, and radiant in the Pushkin manner.

During that same 1935 season another epoch-making Shakespearian image was created on the Moscow stage: the Lear of Samuel Mikhoels. Here the second and supreme aspect of the tragedy in Shakespeare was disclosed—when the ideal exists not as an attribute but as the greatest stimulus in the struggle and quest for truth, as a mission and a moral obligation of the individual. After the loss of his kingdom Lear's brain was inflamed with a passionate need for truth. This wounded brain emerged from ancient immobility, and encompassed the darkness of the chaos that spread before him with broad centrifugal waves. Lear's fate filled him with terror and profoundly moved his audience, but there was no place for pity either for the hero or in the throng that sympathised with him. Unlike the classical tradition of the last century, when Aldridge, Rossi, Salvin, Possart and Barnai depicted Lear as a deceived old man going headlong to his doom 'wearing a martyr's crown', Mikhoels's Lear arrived through inhuman suffering at a truth he could pay for with his life. In the last act he appeared as a man who had lost everything but who had gained in exchange something of far greater value—understanding of a contradictory and awesome world. Peering deep into the abyss yawning before him, Lear gradually overcame his false wisdom in the name of living truth.

The stream of Shakespearian tragedy broke out of the confines of the personal fate of great martyrs, and took on its true proportions where the character's tragedy became his understanding of the tragedy of a falsely built world, when its philosophical and social aspects impinged on his personal drama, and the hero became not the victim of circumstances but their impartial witness and terrible judge. The broad social plane of reality was not only seen by the protagonists of Shakespeare's plays, as reflected in his tragedies, but had to become the most important condition for a new and truthful interpretation of Shakespeare. The vacuum in which the solitary giants of Shakespearian tragedy and their pygmy opponents usually operated began to be filled with the breath and sound of history, with that motley scene of plebeian life which Marx and Engels called 'Falstaffian'.

Romeo and Juliet, produced by A. D. Popov at the Revolutionary Theatre during the 1935 'Shakespearian' season, was an example of this filling of the action with the spirit of the times.

This tragedy of love opened with a brutal, bloody scene. The quarrel between the retainers and gentlemen of the houses of Montague and Capulet, sparked off by a comic wrangle between the servants, burst into flames of internecine war. A youth in a red cape, rushing impetuously on to the stage, his rapier flashing like lightning and the figure falling backward there and then—this image of a young eagle mortally wounded on his very first flight served as a prelude to the main theme of the play, and immediately put the personal tragedy of Romeo and Juliet into its historical context.

The historical character of the play was shown in clearly delineated portraits of its feudal characters, in Falstaffian humour, and in interludes introduced by the producer himself (not without a certain naïveté), contrasting with the scenes of feudal strife. But it was not by these alone that the play's social significance was deepened. The main triumph was gained by Astanov as Romeo and Babanova as Juliet.

'Romeo and Juliet are wise people, not cooing doves', Popov stated challengingly. Astanov and Babanova led their young lovers away from the narrow sphere of sweet emotion and depicted their love as 'a revelation', an exultant meeting with mankind's new world, and their sorrow as filled with burning anger against the eternal power of evil.

A remarkable thing took place—Shakespeare's famous lyrical tragedy was

seen in all its social content ; it not only merged with the cruel world of the chronicles, but was enriched with the power of resistance. The producer's intention was quite specific. 'In the struggle to mould the new man, to eradicate the birthmarks of the old order', he wrote, 'it is extraordinarily useful to recreate the image of the man of the Renaissance. Here Shakespeare comes to our aid.'

But whereas Astanov's Romeo was, in the final analysis, rather overburdened with 'self-consciousness', Babanova's Juliet was more fortunate ; the glitter of her mind did not obscure the freshness and ardour of her feelings. One wanted to compare this radiant Juliet not with a cooing dove but with a nightingale trilling out the joy of love. So, through a pure and noble emotional structure, through a passionate struggle for love, the play took on 'a harmony of thought and emotion, of word and deed, of will and action' (A. Popov) and because of this the story—which is not the saddest in the world—was justifiably called an 'optimistic tragedy' by the producer.

In this direct fashion Shakespeare became part of the contemporary scene. That happy year, 1935, should be engraved in letters of gold in world Shakespeariana. Ostuzhev's Othello, Mikhoels's Lear and Popov's *Romeo and Juliet*—never in all his centuries-old history had Shakespeare known such a feast. It marked a new historical stage in the understanding of this great writer. Shakespeare was performed on many national and provincial stages of the Soviet Union. A new edition of Shakespeare was published in these years with a large number of excellent new translations. A Soviet Shakespeariana came into being, headed by that remarkable authority and inspired Shakespearian scholar Professor M. M. Morozov.

And during these years fascism emerged, the very embodiment of bestial egoism and anti-humanism. Good and evil could not be comprehended in the arena of world history outside the clash of the two social systems of socialism and fascism.

Speaking as it were for all Soviet Shakespearian actors, A. Ostuzhev wrote : 'In these days of the reign of bestial chauvinism propagated by medieval fanatics in the fascist countries, every actor depicting a genuinely Shakespearian Othello must base his interpretation of the role on its political significance.'

Socialism emerged as the sole legitimate heir of humanism—Shakespeare's conception of the ideal man proved akin to our own. Shakespeare's love of man took on flesh and blood.

Soviet man—'the forefather of new mankind' (M. Gorky)—was waging a ruthless struggle against the evil that multiplied in the capitalist world : a struggle that demanded herculean efforts, supreme spiritual endeavour and sacrifice, that abounded in tragic clashes, successes and defeats, but was waged tirelessly, day after day, by millions of people. Historical optimism was its hallmark. That was the real basis of the renewed humanism and the basis of the new discovery of Shakespeare. It was from these deep sources that an understanding of the unity of the tragic and optimistic in Shakespeare flowed, when the real historical links of man and his epoch were discernible, when from the penetrating vision of the modern philosophy of history a new conception of Shakespeare's dramas arose which disclosed their true historical and philosophical proportions. But this new and authentic Shakespeare was revealed not only as a result of a profound, social examination of his art ; an immense part was played by the very maturity of Soviet art.

Despite the power of the romantic and realistic solution of nineteenth-century Shakespearian tragedy, there was no complete interpretation of Shakespearian realism at that time. Neither the poetic formula of the romantics

nor the principles of psychological realism could disclose all the wealth and diversity of Shakespeare's style. Its scope is illimitable. What once had provoked the ridicule of the classicists and had been swept away as rubbish by the Enlightenment proved to be the greatest riches of realistic art. The bounds of realism in *Hamlet* do indeed appear limitless—the philosophical meditations of the prince, pouring forth in clear-cut aphorisms; the clumsy wit of Polonius borrowed from the arsenal of the doctor of the *Commedia dell'Art*; the powerful, almost old-fashioned pathos of the Hecuba soliloquy; the gentle song of Ophelia, as if wafted on the winds from the fields; the precise psychology of Hamlet's emotions in the scene with his father's ghost, at the same time the coarse words that escape his lips about the mole burrowing in the ground; the charm of the farcical crudity of the grave-digger's scene—is it possible to enumerate all the stylistic facets of the tragedy? And all this occurs in the most 'austere' play, while we need to speak about Shakespeare as a whole, the author of tragedy, of comedy, and of the histories; and when we do so the stylistic spectrum shines with more lustre than the sun's.

The realism of the nineteenth century, with its austerity and restraint of form, took a great deal from Shakespeare's treasure-house, but was unable to exhaust it. Twentieth-century realism, inheriting all that was most significant and best from its great predecessor, proved richer in its range of style.

The social revolution cleansed this style and enriched it to an extraordinary degree. Socialist realism was born, with the flights of romanticism and profound social thought of Gorky's heroes, with the tender lyricism and delicate poetic intuition of Blok, with the political drama and passion of Mayakovsky, with A. Tolstoy's sense of history and tangibility of image, with the epic breadth of Sholokhov's canvas; and in addition there was the living legacy of Leo Tolstoy, Chekhov and Bunin.

It was precisely in the second half of the 'thirties that the most interesting stage of new artistic discoveries began—the stage of refinement of style and genre. Not only were the most important ideas in Shakespeare's dramas disclosed, but those of his comedies also. This occurred in conformity with the inner law of realism that 'the trend should flow of its own accord from the situation and action, without any particular emphasis' (F. Engels).

The first triumphs which established the basic standards of Shakespearian interpretation proved not to have taken place 'without any particular emphasis', and the conception of the image was too obvious.

This concreteness and emotional definiteness of the nature of Shakespeare's characters, which at the same time retained the precision and depth of their ideals, were first attained, we think, by the leading actors of the Georgian theatre, Akaky Khorava as Othello and Akaky Vassadze as Iago. Othello appeared on the scene, a figure of cast steel, with shining olive skin, with a low, husky voice and a firm impetuous step. And alongside him, supple in every movement, walked, glided and flitted the smiling and servile Iago.

Two men stood before us; one a warrior by nature, yet a creator of life in the main trend of his personality, the other a destroyer of life, a cynic who devoted the force of his mind to overthrowing and debasing people, to subordinating ideals to instincts, to presenting instincts as ideals. We have deliberately combined the two aspects, the outer and the inner man, to show that the more solidly and tangibly the images were portrayed the more clearly the essence of the characters became defined.

Khorava's Othello was a builder of life, and for him creation was the very nature of man; therefore the natural emerges here not as an elemental force or barbarism, but as the grounds for the exercise of reason and morals. . . .

There stood Othello, seething with anger, bathed in tears, his soul torn by mortal torment. This huge man, with a strong, powerful body and a mighty soul, collapsed on the back of a chair and, with his broad shoulders heaving with sobs, again and again tore convulsively at his breast and ripped his shirt. Thinking to arouse base instincts in Othello, Iago aroused in him the keenest abhorrence of these base instincts. When the laws of rational human society proved false, nature spoke up with a mighty voice in the Moor and vengeance was created in the name of humanity itself.

The wealth of styles of socialist realism in the mature period of its development helped to solve a second problem—that of genre in Shakespeare. Hitherto world theatre had been mainly preoccupied with his tragedies. It was necessary to solve a complicated problem : to restore Shakespeare the humanist and psychologist in the comedies while preserving the charm and originality of Renaissance realism ; for without finding a precise stylistic solution it was impossible to reveal the idea and the moral underlying the comedy. In three plays presented almost simultaneously (*The Taming of the Shrew*, Central Red Army Theatre ; *Much Ado About Nothing*, Vakhtangov Theatre ; and *As You Like It*, Yermolova Theatre) the Soviet theatre successfully resolved this problem.

Just as after restoration the great canvases of the Renaissance artists glow with their original beauty of colour and begin to live and breathe, so the real nature of man's passions revived and sparkled anew in the comedies.

Shakespeare's sense of the harmonious, already observed in the tragedies, was particularly evident in his comedies. His kinship with the people found direct expression, a healthy morale was blended with macaroni entertainment, the deep truth of experience organically penetrated the field of careless rapture, and dramatic conflicts became the pointers to a vigorous and uncompromising struggle for truth that carried within it the intoxication of battle. The many variations of style in the comedies, inherent in Shakespeare's poetry, came to light through the many-sided medium of modern realism and unity of theatricality and truth.

In the three comedies referred to there was an organic merging of the standards of the 'Stanislavsky system' with the laws of the theatre affirmed by Eugene Vakhtangov ; psychology, irony, lyricism, buffoonery—all were intermingled in a single, integral style. The central action concerned real characters of the Renaissance, who, too, in their own way, were 'titans', titans of intrigue, wit, and love of life. But in the bouts of will and character, in the clashes of the comedies, the dramatic and moral content of the struggle was revealed ; in the clear, vivid sketches of the personalities involved their essential human qualities were not lost sight of.

It is worth recalling Petruchio and Katherine as played by V. Pestovsky and L. Dobrazhanskaya. He is a simple man : decisive, coarse, a son of his adventurous age, breathing the romantic spirit of 'Merrie England' ; his primary motive is to increase his fortune through marriage. She has a direct and fearless nature, although capricious, and has a saucy tongue that stands her in good stead against hypocrites, idiots and the vulgar. Pestovsky and Dobrazhanskaya did not portray the primitive clashes of the tamer and the shrew, but played a clever, passionate and freedom-loving man and a passionate, freedom-loving woman who both succeeded after a long struggle and ordeal in overcoming evil qualities in themselves and in each other and uniting as equals for mutual happiness. The basis of their love was the happy feeling of identity of mind and purpose, and the tenderness of friendship that is the highest form of love. The force of their passion was sublimated to the deepest mutual respect and unity of hope, thought and feeling.

The buoyant world outlook of the Renaissance coloured the whole of this delightful production. It was reflected in the strong characters of Petruchio and Katherine, in the mirth and laughter of the servants, in the ironic treatment of the negative characters, and finally in the wise and human moral of the unity of love and friendship, of the equality of man and woman, and of family happiness, based on loyalty of feeling and community of thought. So was revealed the closeness of the ethical basis of the classical comedy to the outlook of our time.

The production was unusually complex, yet was interpreted by its stylistic solution. The Renaissance style was embodied in the drama of strong wills, the audacity of mind, the stormy passions and clownish humour, and the artless manners, free movement and broad gestures. In this way, retaining freedom to develop the characters and by grouping them in a definite key, Popov united all the stylistic nuances of the production in a single scale. All this happened in a play which it had been customary to consider a 'Shakespearean farce', and one, moreover, governed by a primitive and patriarchal morality.

There was also a second notable Shakespearean pair of shrews—Beatrice and Benedick from *Much Ado About Nothing*. Again the characterisation was clear and precise. Reuben Simonov's Benedick was a youth endowed with wit, wonderful humour, beauty of soul and a brave heart, and was a perfect foil for T. Mansurova's Beatrice—at once clever, caustic, elegant, and simple-hearted. The two played their parts with the advice of the enchanting Princess Turandot in mind; the whole time on the boundary of irony and truth, laughing bitterly at the irresponsibility of their own feelings and revelling in the sorrows of their hearts. The sharpness, and at times clowning, of the verbal skirmishes now delighted, now frightened the duellers, for at any moment the quarrel could be transformed into a declaration of love; and so that this declaration, God save us, should not be sentimental they masked it in a trice with a jest. The penetrating and faithful conception of Simonov, Mansurova and the producer, J. Rappaport, resulted in a two-plane treatment of the characters of Beatrice and Benedick. Externally they appeared gay and care-free, even a bit cynical and flippant by nature; it was not these aspects that determined their fundamental character, rather was it the moral indignation that shaped the personalities of the young man and woman.

An enchanting, almost Chekhovian, naturalness triumphed in *As You Like It*, which seemed to have been reborn on the stage of the young Yermolova Theatre. As we know, force of circumstances prevented Stanislavsky from completing his most interesting plan for *Othello*. However, his pupils Nikolai Khmelev and Maria Knebel made manifestly clear the great power of his 'system' to reveal the genuine psychological depths of Shakespeare while fully preserving the poetic elements of the fairy tale. The acuteness and vigour of tragic feeling in Khmelev, and the lyricism and good humour of Knebel, acting in perfect harmony, lit a poetic fire in the souls of the youthful players; they entered the enchanted Forest of Arden (designed by the third creator of this production, N. Shifrin) as if it were their birthplace.

The comedy was produced with an amazing feeling for the complicated interweaving of strains of tragedy, comedy, folk-lore and parody. The Soviet theatre was already able, through the tragic, to disclose the basic optimism of Shakespeare's genius. On this occasion the tragic theme of the heroes of the comedy was disclosed through the gay and lyrical atmosphere of the play. This tragic quality was established not through the lamentations of the melancholy Jacques, portrayed a shade too seriously by S. Yakut, but through the furious and fearless resistance of the heroes to the tragic turns in their lives. These characters as played by the Yermolova company were also in their

own way 'wise people and not cooing doves'. But how the play resounded with warbling, whistling and trilling—and happiness. Rosalind's words 'By my life, I do, which I tender dearly' became the motto of the production. But they did not carry Shakespeare's characters away into the garden of an Arcadian idyll. They knew that the real world, cruel and unjust, existed beyond the limits of the Forest of Arden, but they were not oppressed by this knowledge. On the contrary, it quickened their gaiety and made it challenging and necessary. The depth of their experience was interpreted by the emotional restraint characteristic of nearly all the performers in this clever and frankly light-hearted production.

We have not sufficient space for our wealth of impressions, and must omit many memorable Soviet productions of Shakespeare. But the pinnacle of what was done in the pre-war years, the very 'soul' of Shakespeare, was Galina Ulanova's Juliet. Here was everything in visible bodily form: the undying thrill and freshness of Shakespeare's poetry, his most subtle and penetrating psychology, his impulsive, passionate romanticism, the wisdom that came from experience and understanding of the tragic, the harmony of the emotions, and the all-pervading exultant joy of being—and probably much more that affected us through the music of movement. Like the bright godhead of antiquity, with his light, winged feet, Ulanova's Juliet flew round the theatres of the whole world, and the whole world saw the 'soul' of our Shakespeare. It acclaimed Ulanova's Juliet as a creation of genius; the applause of millions approved not only her plastic genius but her 'idea' of Shakespeare, which was indeed born, like the goddess of wisdom from the head of Zeus, from what is called in our dry, scholarly language 'the Soviet conception' of Shakespeare.

The international Shakespearian 'exchange' begun by Ulanova has been continued by the British companies that have performed in Moscow. We will speak of only one of these, Peter Brook's production of *Hamlet*, with Paul Scofield in the title role. It was a joy to see that when there is fidelity to Shakespeare at the pinnacles of creative art an interpretation is born very close to our own. We sensed the principle underlying the interpretation in Hamlet's democratic bearing (how simply and firmly he shakes the sentries' hands!). Not for nothing is it said in the play that 'Hamlet loves the people'. Watching Scofield's Hamlet one believed this. His strong, pliant body radiated youthful energy, his soul was ready for good deeds, his mind for creation. But everything turned into misfortune. Scofield's Hamlet did not withdraw from people into the hiding place of his own gloomy thoughts; his determination to avenge his father's death, therefore, is viewed as an objectively inevitable action prompted by the very standards of social ethics, and his meditation and wavering, insight and soulsickness give the impression of first contact with the world of evil in a man who till then had thought only of himself. But the intensity of the spiritual process indicates that Hamlet is tragically alarmed by the general fate of the people and is preparing to battle against the real carriers of evil. This major theme of the image felt all the time in the actor's playing—sometimes the personal-authentic in each intonation and gesture—pushed the philosophical plane of the role into the background. All the same, Scofield's Hamlet was a sign of healthy and powerful ideological, as well as artistic, trends.

The best most recent achievements in the Soviet Shakespearian forum are the Othello of V. Tkhapsaev, an Ossetian, the plastic version of the same role by the Georgian Vakhtank Chabukiani, and the Brutus of the Uzbek Shukur Burkhanov.

The modernity of Tkhapsaev's work lay in his direct and amazingly authentic

re-creation of Othello's inner world. His Moor was a simple man with the simplicity of a living human being; each spiritual change in him, therefore, took on an original naturalness, and once this happened the tragedy and significance of Othello's sufferings emerged with real force and degree. His poetic aspect and the nature of his sufferings were preserved; the actor put himself in Othello's place, possessing at first the happiness of an harmonious outlook, and then experiencing the passionate torment of losing that spiritual harmony and the tragedy of the destruction of his moral ideals. The terrible spiritual crisis of Tkhapsaev's Othello was truly dramatic, since for him the possibility of existence and the need for a noble view of life absolutely coincided. While retaining the conception of Desdemona traditional to the Soviet theatre and treating her murder as the direct Nemesis for his betrayal and violation of his ideals, Tkhapsaev interpreted this scene on a far more subjective level and in terrible spiritual torment, punishing his beloved, ended Othello's spiritual existence well before the classical finale with its 'Turk from Aleppo'.

The contemporary character of the work of Vakhtang Chabukiani lies in his ability to transfer the manly truth of Othello's suffering to the world of music and dance without idealising it and without that 'femininity' that constantly and fatally gets mixed into male roles in ballet, which would be disastrous when performing Othello. The severity of the Moor's being, which could have led to a coarsening of the plastic image, became the source of Chabukiani's heroic solution, in which the free, sweeping gesture and the monumental bearing of the torso and the very tension of his powerful muscles all spoke of the great spirit of the image, of the force of his tremendous rise and fall, in which joy and suffering, experienced physically, seizing the dancer's whole frame, re-created the tragic experience in all its truth and with that heroic fulfilment which itself culminates in the exultant and all-conquering joy of the harmonious and victorious finale.

Finally, the contemporary nature of the very latest *chef d'oeuvre* of Soviet Shakespeariana—Burkhanov's Brutus—comes out in the actor's ability to fill his role with the republican feeling and the greatness of spirit of a fighter against tyranny, while preserving the intimate experiences, the slightest changes in the inner life of the hero in all their truth. Burkhanov's Brutus, taking the conscious step so terrible for him, the murder of his best friend, Cæsar, acts in the name of a great liberating mission—to rid the people of Cæsar the despot. The role thus unimpeachably resolved along all three lines—ideological, psychological and plastic—deserves special treatment.

The latest successes of our actors have not, of course, come easily. Considerable difficulties lie in wait on the actor's road. It often happens that the idea of the performance, the 'idea of the role', predominates over the direct, living feeling of the image, and then the poetic construction of the play is pushed into the background by the living individuality of the character. And then the impression is created that the actor is not newly creating the living personality of the character 'as if for the first time', but is merely portraying a recognisable literary type. Over-emphasis on 'the meaning' of the image at the expense of its character leads to an emphatically rationalist reading of the part, even though the performer employs the method of romantic 'warming' of the text.

We stand on the threshold of new triumphs and expect new contributions to the treasure-house of the 'Soviet Shakespeare', particularly from the producers. A beginning was made by the veterans of our theatre, Nikolai Okhlopkov and Yuri Zavadsky, with their *Hamlet* and *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Much has been said and argued about these productions, but there

is no disputing the originality of their conception or the scale of their solutions. In any case, opponents should reply with deeds, not words. The Soviet theatre now possesses a galaxy of producers both young and matured, nearly every one of whom stands today at the helm of a company, but none of them has as yet tested his growing powers on Shakespeare. There is no doubt, however, that each one is dreaming and preparing for this responsible encounter.

Free mankind is moving towards an epoch when 'all-round harmonious development of the personality' is due, when 'the moral basis will grow greater in the life of society', when a real accumulation of spiritual wealth will take place. An era is approaching when the art of the theatre, having mastered a synthesis of words, music and plastic forms, will be capable of conquering all the poetic heights of Shakespeare. To preserve his image, great and eternal, to utter his words, his thoughts, his passions, is very, very necessary to us.

The page of the calendar—April 23, 1964—has been turned. Shakespeare has entered his fifth century.

SHAKESPEARE AND RUSSIAN MUSIC

Igor Belza

RUSSIAN SHAKESPEARIANA is rich and varied in all its domains, including that of music. Much valuable information relating to the works of Russian composers on Shakespearian themes may be gained from a brilliant study by the late Professor Ivan Sollertinsky of the Leningrad Academy of Music, entitled *Shakespeare and World Music* (in a symposium published in Leningrad in 1939 on the occasion of the 375th anniversary, and republished in 1956). Several reviews of Russian musical Shakespeariana are also to be found in the jubilee number of the *Russian Musical Journal*, which appeared on the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death (No. 15-16, April 10-17, 1916), and in an article by H. G. Sear in the *Musical Times* (No. 1213, March 1944, pp. 78-83).

It would be a mistake to think that all compositions based on Shakespeare's works have been of equal merit, and this is true not only of Russian music but also of that of other countries. Much of it has been written merely as an accompaniment illustrating events occurring in Shakespeare's plays. On the other hand, we have a number of valuable musical works on Shakespearian themes by Russian composers. From the earliest works I would mention the beautiful *Ophelia's Song* written by Alexander Varlamov.*

The first important Russian Shakespearian work was Balakirev's music for *King Lear*. The composer was engaged on this during the years 1858-61, working on it with an enthusiasm evident from his letters. At this period Balakirev was greatly helped by advice and material given him by Vladimir Stasov, the noted critic and connoisseur of art, who did so much for Russian art and Russian composers.

He sent Balakirev a number of English airs, including songs sung in Shakespeare's time. This material and the critic's advice proved very useful to Balakirev in the course of his work. Thus, for example, in the intermezzo before the third act (Lear and the Fool on the heath during the storm) the theme of the music is based on the melody sung by the Fool during performances of the tragedy in Shakespeare's day. It is interesting to note that in a letter telling Stasov that the music was nearing completion Balakirev wrote: 'There will be something of you in this music. I have always found in you a great kinship

* There is also a well-known song of the same title written by Sergei Vassilenko to words by Alexander Blok.

with Lear. You have the same lofty, direct and untamed, unblemished nature.' It is not surprising, therefore, that in the *de luxe* edition of the full score of *King Lear* the musical text is preceded by a page bearing an inscription in golden letters : 'Dedicated to Vladimir Vasilievich Stasov by Mili Balakirev.' The score, written for full symphonic orchestra (which attains enormous dimensions in performance), consists of an overture and separate numbers, including intermezzo. In this music, which constitutes an organic whole with the production, Balakirev did not aim merely at illustrating the performance, but strove for a complete symphonic development. Eloquent testimony of this is contained in a well-known passage from his letter to Chaikovsky :

'The introduction begins *maestoso*, then becomes rather mystical (Kent's prophecy). The introduction fades away to make way for a tumultuous *allegro* (this is Lear himself—the lion who, though worsted, is still strong). The characters of Regan and Goneril are episodic. Finally, the second theme is gentle, tender-hearted Cordelia. In the middle section there is the storm—Lear and the Fool on the heath ; then a repetition of the *allegro*—Lear's spirit crushed by the heartlessness of Regan and Goneril ; and the overture ends with notes slowly dying away (Lear over the body of Cordelia). Then follows a repetition of Kent's prophecy being fulfilled, and then death—calm, stern death.'

It was Balakirev who suggested to Chaikovsky the subject of his first Shakespearian score. Professor Nikolai Kashkin (describing in his *Reminiscences of Chaikovsky* [Moscow, 1896] his walks in the company of Balakirev and Chaikovsky) says : 'I remember how, during one such walk, M.A. [Balakirev] suggested to Chaikovsky the plan of an overture for *Romeo and Juliet*. In my memory at any rate, this recollection is bound up with the memory of a delicious May day—the green forest and tall pines among which we three were strolling.'

Farther on, describing the subject of the symphonic composition as proposed by Balakirev, Kashkin remarks that the latter 'himself was apparently carried away by the idea, for he expounded the plan with as much clarity and force of detail as if the overture already existed and was perfectly familiar to him'. Balakirev's enthusiasm communicated itself to Chaikovsky to such a degree that at one time the latter even proposed to write an opera on the same theme. Soon afterwards the well-known *Fantasia Overture* (as Chaikovsky entitled his symphonic poems) appeared on the theme proposed by Balakirev.

Nikolai Rubinstein conducted the first performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in Moscow on March 4, 1870, using the first version, which, incidentally, has remained unpublished to this day. The following year Chaikovsky published a second version which he dedicated to Balakirev, and ten years later a third. Shortly before his death he began a duet for soprano and tenor on the same subject, which was afterwards completed by Taneev. The very fact that there are three versions of the score of *Romeo and Juliet* is evidence of the unusual care Chaikovsky lavished on his Shakespearian first-born. Here is what Professor Kashkin wrote about the revision of the music :

'It was probably in the spring of 1870 that Balakirev heard the performance that he himself had suggested. He did not approve some sections of the overture, and insisted that they be altered, which the composer did in the summer of 1871. The changes were considerable and in parts essential ; in the first place, the introduction to the overture was written over again ; a funeral march which had at first been at the end was cut out altogether and replaced by the existing *finale* ; and lastly changes were made here and there in the instrumentation. Many years later Chaikovsky again made a number

of alterations to *Romeo and Juliet*, this time confining himself to shortening certain portions of superfluous length.'

Chaikovsky's *Poem* has entered the world repertoire and its merits are too well known to be enlarged on here. Suffice it to say that, although in the main both Balakirev and Chaikovsky followed the plot of the tragedy, what we actually have is not programme music but a synthetic revelation of the complex and beautiful world of the feelings of Shakespeare's heroes. Hence the emotional expressiveness of *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Soon after the publication of *Romeo and Juliet* Chaikovsky turned his thoughts once again to Shakespeare. The theme and programme of the new composition were suggested by Vladimir Stasov. This time the play being considered was not a tragedy, but *The Tempest*. In August 1873, during the course of ten days, Chaikovsky ('with little effort, as if moved by some supernatural force', as he himself admitted in a letter to Baroness von Meck) wrote his *Tempest*, a symphonic fantasia dedicated—need it be said?—to Stasov. It was first performed the same year under the direction of Nikolai Rubinstein.

Here is the theme for the fantasia as proposed by Stasov: 'The sea. The sorcerer Prospero sends Ariel, the spirit obedient to his will, to produce a tempest that wrecks the ship bearing Fernando. A fairy island. The first timid flutterings of love in Miranda and Fernando. Ariel and Caliban. The lovers submitting to the omnipotent lure of passion. Prospero casts off the magic influence and leaves the island. The sea.'

This programme has found sublime realisation in Chaikovsky's score, in which the scenic episodes form a picturesque background, setting off the play of human passions. From Chaikovsky's letters we gather that he set particular store by this work. Incidentally, it should be noted that it is the only one of his symphonic compositions conceived in a spirit of optimism and vitality, in direct contrast to his *Fate*, *Romeo*, *Manfred* and *Francesca*. There, perhaps, is the reason why *The Tempest* was so dear to the heart of the author of the *Symphonie Pathétique*, who spoke of himself as 'a man who passionately loves life and as passionately hates death'.

I should like, in this connection, to tell a story relating to the last years of the composer's life, and which has hitherto remained unpublished. A few years ago, in Kiev, I came across a letter from Chaikovsky preserved in an envelope, the upper part of which had been cut off with the obvious purpose of concealing the name of the addressee. I give the text of this letter which Chaikovsky sent from Klin, where he was living at the time, to St. Petersburg. The cancellation on the envelope bears the date June 2, 1891.

'Dear Sir [the letter runs], The method of composing ballet music is as follows: a subject is chosen and then the administration of the theatre draws up a programme suitable to its means. The choreographer then begins to work out a detailed plan of the scenes and dances, indicating exactly not only the rhythm and character of the music, but also the actual number of bars. Only then does the composer begin to write the music. So if you wish *The Tempest* to be staged in, let us say, the Petersburg Imperial Theatre you must address yourself to Vsevolozhsky, the director, and to Petipa, the choreographer. Quite likely, if your programme is accepted I shall be asked to write the music for it, although I consider the theme of *The Tempest* too serious and profound to use for ballet. I really cannot imagine Miranda and Ferdinand making the usual leaps and pirouettes. I herewith return the programme of the ballet. With profound regret, I have the honour to subscribe myself, P. Chaikovsky.'

The contents of this rather curious letter go to show the author's reverent

attitude to the theme of *The Tempest*. In no way averse to ballet music, Chaikovsky preferred to base it on subjects of fantasy. But in the fantasy of *The Tempest* he glimpsed a depth of human emotion and a sublime poem of pure love and happiness.

During the last years of his life Chaikovsky turned once again to the images created by Shakespeare. *Hamlet*—a symphonic poem or a fantasia overture—was composed in the year 1888 and dedicated to Edward Grieg. It was performed the same year in St. Petersburg, under the direction of the author himself. It was followed in 1891 by full orchestral music for the tragedy, consisting of sixteen instrumental and vocal numbers, including two songs for Ophelia and one for the grave-digger. Thus the images of *Hamlet* received very full expression in Chaikovsky's music.

Not long before his death in the summer of 1890, Anton Rubinstein, inspired by the characters of another of Shakespeare's plays, composed one of his finest works—the symphonic overture to *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Another musician who wrote music for the same tragedy was Nikolai Klenovsky, a pupil of Chaikovsky's and a gifted composer and conductor who accomplished a great deal in the field of theatre music. A not very successful opera on the same subject was written in the late nineties by Sergei Yufarov.

Following the chronological sequence of compositions, we must here mention Arensky's music for *The Tempest*, consisting of seventeen comparatively short numbers, including several vocal ones (three songs for Ariel). The score bears the impress of a master hand, the poetically expressive intermezzo to Acts II and III being particularly striking; nevertheless, it did not stay on the concert platform, possibly, in the main, because it was simply an accompaniment to the action on the stage.

Of the symphonic poems that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century we should record the colourful *Macbeth* music by Nikolai Cherepnin. The central interest lies in the scene of the witches' cave (Act IV). This is one of the composer's finest works, displaying to full advantage his brilliant orchestration.

Next come a number of vocal compositions; viz. a cycle by Michael Ippolitov-Ivanov *Ten Shakespearian Sonnets* and Fyodor Akimov's *Song of Oberon* (from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Incidental music was also written for certain stage performances of the plays, but in the main proved of no particular interest. Among them, however, one or two which in my opinion have undeservedly suffered neglect may be mentioned, such as Nikolai Sokolov's charming music to *A Winter's Tale*, which consists of an introduction, several symphonic intermezzos and separate episodes.

After the October Revolution we find interest in Shakespeare steadily growing, a tendency that manifested itself not only in a considerable number of compositions but in the variety of musical genres, which included an opera—*The Twins*—based on *Twelfth Night* by Alexander Shenshin, a gifted composer, lately deceased.

One of the most successful Shakespearian works is the comic opera *The Taming of the Shrew* by Vissarion Shebalin, who not long ago also wrote a brilliant score for a production of *Hamlet*. What a source of inspiration this subject has been in Russian music—classical and modern! All the various approaches to the tragedy of *Hamlet* found their reflection. We call to mind Shostakovich's music for the Vakhtangov Theatre, which has entered the symphonic repertoire in the form of an orchestral suite—music which, in agreement with the general conception of the production, stands on the boundary line between the tragic and the grotesque and bears unmistakably expressionistic traits.

Another musician attracted by *Hamlet* was Sergei Prokofiev, whose music attained a high degree of expressiveness. Incidentally, his fourth gavotte for pianoforte is little else than the pantomime enacted by the wandering players that figures in the *Hamlet* music. This explains the tragic notes of the middle of the gavotte, which coincides with the poisoning scene. Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* has won renown not only in the theatre but also through the orchestral suites and the cycle of piano pieces. The composer did not aim at any established style, but, on the contrary, availing himself of every modern device of expressiveness, created ballet music possessing all the highest features of genuine symphonic music and endowed first and foremost with all the marks of humanism that emanate from the immortal tragedy. That is why these orchestral suites, even when heard apart from their stage setting, have the power to arouse deep emotion. In the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music Prokofiev's lyrical gifts developed and came to maturity; and it is not too much to say that in the slow movement of his 7th Sonata is felt a living link with the musical image of Friar Lawrence. In this Shakespearian subject Prokofiev grasped the essential element—the nobility of the humanist ideal.

While speaking of Shakespearian themes in ballet we should mention Victor Oransky's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, produced in Moscow. Its choreographically expressive music, full of the joy of living, contributed in no small measure to the success of the production, the central place in which is occupied by the magnificent figure of Falstaff.

Neither Oransky, let it be said, nor Tikhon Khrennikov in his brilliant music for *Much Ado About Nothing* set himself any particular task, but both scores are heard with very lively satisfaction.

A strong impression is produced by *Othello and Desdemona*, a short ballet by Alexander Krein first performed by Olga Lepeshinskaya and Peter Gusev in 1942. If the composer called his *Salome* a 'poem of passion' this scene might surely be called 'a poem of love', since its tragic epilogue reveals the culminating point of Othello's ecstatic love for Desdemona. The music of the whole scene is rich in an ornamentation and poignant harmony hardly compatible with the generally accepted idea of ballet music. Krein, however, just like Prokofiev, thinks of the choreographic embodiment of Shakespearian subjects only in terms of the symphonic style.

Among works for the piano, apart from Prokofiev's compositions, which are virtually transcriptions of symphonic episodes from ballet, of more than usual appeal are two dances by Leonid Polovinkin: *Ariel*, a gavotte, and *Miranda*, a saraband, fragments of a larger work contemplated on the subject of *The Tempest* which, judging by these pieces, promised to be a most vivid creation.

Shostakovich, who has recently written a cycle of songs on the words of English poets, included the text of Sonnet LXVI in his work, which he dedicated to Professor Sollertinsky, a great friend of his. This song is remarkable for its concentration and pathetic expressiveness.

It only remains to add that after this song Dmitri Kabalevsky wrote a cycle, *Ten Shakespeare Sonnets*, translated by Samuel Marshak.

To round off the present enumeration I would like to mention a song of my own composition, recently written, on the text of Sonnet LXXIII ('That time of year thou mayst in me behold').

The Shakespearian works of our composers enjoy great popularity in the Soviet Union. On September 13, 1942, during the days of the Leningrad blockade, at a concert given by the pianist Alexander Kamensky the first part of the programme was devoted to Shakespeare's works expressed in pianoforte music. Leningraders came to listen to this music, sensing with particular force what is so close to us in Shakespeare's art—the strength of his affirmation of

life, his courage and his wisdom. His genius inspired many Soviet musicians other than Russian ones ; and among the best works of our time I would name the Ukrainian composer Boris Lyatshinsky's orchestral suite *Romeo and Juliet* and one of the greatest achievements of Georgian music, Alexei Machavariani's ballet *Othello*.

MOSCOW 1964

Deana Levin

THIRTY YEARS ago I set out from London for the Soviet Union with a visa for a month. In those days, which now seem so far away, that was like setting out for the moon. Very few people knew anything about the country. We read about five-year plans, about collectivisation and industrialisation ; but what the Soviet people were like, how they were carrying out those plans, what they felt, we did not know.

My friends thought I was mad to go off like that. Some warned me in all seriousness to be careful what I said and where I went, or I should land in prison. They assured me that all foreigners were followed about everywhere. One woman of my acquaintance was absolutely sure that she would never see me again. It was as if I were setting out on a most perilous journey.

Ever since I was a schoolgirl I had been a member of the Friends of the Soviet Union, and now I just wanted to see for myself. So I boarded a small Soviet ship at Hayes Wharf, near London Bridge, and travelled via the Kiel Canal to Leningrad. The only Russian I knew at that time was the alphabet. There were not many passengers—a few Russians returning from work abroad, a few English engineers and their families going out to work in the new Soviet factories, one or two English business men, and some other people, including me, who were going on a visit or to study, like the young American bound for the Cinema Institute under the famous Eisenstein.

One of the English business men kept telling me what a terrible place I was going to. He assured me that women were nationalised and that their children were taken away from them at birth by the state ! That story at any rate has died for good.

What was Moscow like in 1933 ? Muscovites themselves called it an old village. The narrow streets were cobbled, the one- and two-storied brick houses were outnumbered by wooden ones ; trams were the main means of transport, and they meandered along the streets, causing bottlenecks in the traffic. To provide some extra living space another story or two were built on to the brick or stone houses that were strong enough to carry the weight.

The shops had nothing in their windows and very little inside. Food was strictly rationed, with manual workers getting more bread than others. Every worker was provided with one good main meal a day at his place of work, and his dependants had cards entitling them to eat there too. Schools provided for their pupils in the same way.

I came for a month, and stayed for five years ! I went to teach in a school in Moscow, and I have told the story of that experience in my book *Children in Soviet Russia*. I lived in a little room in a wooden house with a widow and her three daughters. It was heated by a traditional Russian stove, the kind which will be found only in museums in the not so distant future. When we went to the shop where we were registered for food we had to stand in a very long queue for a very long time to get our ration of two eggs a month, or a small piece of butter, or whatever was available. I have stood for three hours, with a book to read in my hand, to get some milk for the smallest girl ; and as an adult I was not entitled to any milk for the first two years of my stay.

There were no cafés, public canteens, restaurants or shops where food could be bought off the ration, and I used to carry a small sandwich in my briefcase if I knew that I could not get home in time for a meal.

Why did I stay when life was so hard ? I stayed because although life was hard materially there was a marvellous spirit. People had taken their destiny into their own hands, and I was on the spot, watching, and perhaps helping a little by educating a group of children. I felt I was taking part in an important moment in history. It did not seem to matter to many of my friends and colleagues that they had to make do and mend clothes that they had worn for years, that they had only sandshoes in summer and felt boots in winter. Factories were being built and workers who had yesterday been ignorant peasants were learning painfully to use machines, to start up the beginnings of industry. It was all very well for the foreign business men who sold these machines to make fun of the Soviet workers and to say they were ruining the machines. In my opinion, the real assessment was made by an English engineer who was helping to install them. He was full of admiration for the former peasants he was teaching ; for they were not only learning to use the machinery, but were attending classes at the same time to learn to read and write. A great drive to eliminate illiteracy was in full swing.

A new life was pushing out the old. Side by side with the growth of industry, the planning of farming, the development of education, there were the problems of beggars on the street corners and even knocking at one's door, the strong smell of humanity in the crowded trams, the bugs and fleas still rampant. I remember enormous clusters of people hanging on to the trams, one foot on the step (there were no automatic doors in those days), and trying to struggle through without losing too many coat buttons on the way !

While I was living in Moscow plans were being made to change the face of the city. It was decided to build an underground railway to help solve the traffic problem. It was decided to straighten and widen the main roads and to get rid of the cobbles in favour of asphalt, and a plan was put forward for building new dwelling houses. That housing plan looks very, very insignificant compared with what is going on in Moscow today, but at that time of shortage of almost every kind of building material it was most important. In those days, too, the old Chinese Wall was dismantled, as well as the old city gates like the Sukharov that stood in the middle of roads and stopped the flow of traffic.

Education was completely reorganised and the basis for the present system was laid. The formal school with a curriculum set by the then Commissariat of Education was established and a beginning made to ensure four years of compulsory schooling in the countryside and seven years in towns and cities. The school entry age was reduced from eight to seven years. The network of evening schools for workers was extended, and classes for literacy were compulsory up to the age of fifty.

In the school where I worked there was an elderly woman who was typical of many at that time. She was well over fifty, but was determined to learn to read and write and to get some general education as well. During the day she worked as our cloakroom attendant and in the evening she went to school. Those evening classes followed the same curriculum as the ordinary day schools, and this woman was in the third class. She told me that her youngest grandchild was one class ahead of her in a day school, and that another grandson aged fifteen was helping her with her studies. ' My children are very proud of me ', she said ; and I thought how right they were.

I had a boy in my class who was not doing very well, and I sent for his mother to discuss the matter with her. ' It is very hard for me to see that he does his homework ', she said. ' You see, I go to evening school, and I am a

class behind him.' She had been in poor health, and so was very slow in educating herself. This boy's problem was not too serious, as his father was persuaded that it was as important to help his son and wife with their schooling as it was to carry on his work as an engineer.

Such problems no longer exist in the Soviet Union, of course, and I remember all those people with great respect.

In the 1930s the people who were running the factories had worked in them for employers before the Revolution; the peasants in the country were tilling land that had formerly belonged to their landlords; children were enjoying their leisure-time pursuits in palaces that not so long before had been the private residences of princes and dukes. At the seaside resorts in the Crimea and the Caucasus the stately holiday villas of the rich were turned over to the workers.

In the relatively short time since then the Soviet Union has become an acknowledged force in the world. It has a powerful industry and already leads the world in some techniques; the geography of the land is being changed by huge dams and hydro-electric stations, by the irrigation of deserts, and by the building of hundreds of miles of canals that serve as waterways. Natural resources have been tapped and used and more and more amenities—housing, food, clothing and cultural goods—are being provided.

When I revisited Moscow for the first time after the war, in 1952, it had already changed out of all recognition. The names of streets were the same, and they ran in the same direction, but there the resemblance ceased. They were wide, lined with trees, and tall buildings had replaced the familiar little ones I had known. Shops were full of things, and so were their windows. But the scars of war were still to be seen in many places—Leningrad, which had withstood 900 days of siege; Kiev, which was being rebuilt after almost total destruction; and the thousands of villages still rising from the ashes.

Everyone I met had lost someone in the war. So many women were widows that I never asked 'What does your husband do?' for fear of hearing the answer 'He was killed in the war'. Millions dead or injured, and so many tasks to be done all over again, so many setbacks in industry and agriculture, and so much courage to rebuild! The scars of war have been covered and the ruins built up again, but the scars in the human heart are not so easily healed.

Many of the things I experienced thirty years ago are now forgotten. But it is worth recalling them. Today, as I walk around Moscow, I look at the people so well dressed, at the women, who can compare with any of their sisters in the capitals of Europe; I look at the endless blocks of new flats in every section of the city; I look at the children, who have every chance of a fine education; and I compare it all with thirty years ago. Now it is not enough for a Soviet citizen to have a flat with central heating and constant hot water; he is looking forward to further amenities: to better furniture, not just to furniture; to better clothes, not just to something to wear; to more modern ways of buying food, not just to plenty of food.

All the things he is thinking of for the future can be obtained only through peace. The terrible tragedy of the last world war is still vivid in his memory and the miseries endured then have not been forgotten. Knowing what they have done in the last thirty years, I marvel at what they might achieve in thirty more years of peace!

THE ANGRY ONES

Yevgeni Yevtushenko

Twentieth century,
century of the sputnik-probe—
how much grief and doubt you hold for this our globe ;
you are good,
yet evil-bent as well,
century—murderer of your own ideal,
century of young people's angry hell.

Yes, young people are extremely angry now.
With despising eyes they spurn this century so.
They despise the parties,
and the government too,
churches,
and old philosophers' distant points of view.
They despise all womankind,
but sleep with them,
they despise the world of banks
and business men.

They despise
with difficult appraisal
even their personal, pitiful despisal.
Stepfather century,
you're not their real sire.
Much you now displease them,
more and more.

There's a fermentation,
dark and dour
in the poisoned youths on Hudson's shore ;
on the Thames,
the Tiber
and the Seine
go these gloomy youths, all one dark vein.
Desperate,

and obstinate,
and reprobate,
they don't fit this century, it's no good . . .
I know what it is they don't want,
what they hate.

What they want—
I wish I understood.
Surely it can't be their youthful creed
merely to curse and swear—
just that indeed ? !

Now I say to them,
from Moscow here,
straight out, man to man,
let's have it clear :
if I'm angry over things a bit,
that is just because, deep in my mind
never piteous non-belief can sit,
but the klaxon-cry—I love my native land.
If I'm peeved at something—hot inside—
that is just because I take a pride
that, with friends,
I form up for the fight,
and I firmly battle for my right !
What's gone wrong there ?
Do you seek the truth ?
' Mass psychosis '—
sight psychiatrists.
Through all Europe strays such sullen youth.
In the States such sullen youth persists.
Twentieth century,
century of the sputnik-sphere,
draw them from the darkness, from the chaos here !
Give them no soft peace, no easy-going pause—
give them faith
in goodness,
in their righteous cause.
These are children,
not a foe to fear.
Twentieth century—
help them ! —
Do you hear ?

—Translated by Walter C. May.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Robert Rozhdestvensky

This poem was reprinted in Russian from 'Pravda' in our spring issue, and readers and students of Russian were invited to submit English translations. The translation below is by Peter Soskice. Others were received from Walter C. May and Graham Webb. Book prizes have been sent to each.

Well, let's begin !
We're late now, as it is.
The hall is dark and ominous with
with smoke . . .

Why don't you speak ?
You've surely got a rod in pickle for
me ;
Who will be first ?
At what bait will you jump
and rush in to bite,
you predatory pikes . . . ?

You there, old baldy-pate,
Shoot one on Pasternak, go on !
I see well how you are fidgeting—
go on !

Or you there, sitting at the side,
pot-bellied and with happy rosy
cheeks,
ask me malevolently :
'What about Stalin ?'
You'll feel no pain in asking ;
it's painful to reply.
But answer you I will.
I'll stand up straight
and talk about the Cult.
It will not be for you
—but others who are not here.

Don't crow for joy ! There
will be no sensations.
Don't count on scandals,
don't lose your sweat in vain.
At once you'll start to cackle
and be wrapped in clouds of smoke,
lose your good-neighbour manners.

Why have you shut your notebook,
madam ?
You don't like my replies ?
I'm sorry now !
Alas, I stay just as I was . . .

You there, old cock,
get out your pencil
and smack your thin lips
on the old one—who orders
me to write !
Explain that I'm in bondage,
and that your news-sheet
is white as snow . . .

Oh how I'd love to stick
uncomfortable words
letter by letter
on to your narrow brow.

To shake the hall
with laughter.
And you would dive
beneath the chairs
fumbling for your specs ! . . .

But in a trice
the freeze-up will again return
and pupils narrow down
with hatred.
Another question
and another miss . . .

A pile of papers rustles drily,
The click of snapping photo-shutters
invokes the THUD
of rifle bolts.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MOSCOW NURSERIES

Elinor Goldschmied

THE SOCIAL and cultural purpose of services providing for the group care of infants and very young children involves theoretical and practical questions of far-reaching human and social significance.

As a background to the following observations it is worth setting out some of these questions. Is a child able to enter into collective social relationships, with advantage and satisfaction, until he has developed out of the primary relationship of infantile dependence? What are the precise factors which favour the infant's emergence from his early state of almost total dependence? What is the place of stress (such as is apparent in the anxiety of a one-year-old child when separated from the adult upon whom he primarily depends) as a formative or destructive experience in very early childhood?

Related directly to this question of separation, which must happen when the mother works, is the problem of the number of substitutes to whom the child must adapt. We can ask to how many substitutes he can adapt without detriment, and precisely at what age and stage of his development. Our answers on this point will determine how many personnel and of what calibre will be required to staff a nursery service adequately, taking into account the hours per working week which are laid down in current practice. Inevitably the shorter the working week the greater the number of women who will form a rota caring for the individual child.

Such questions cannot be answered without thinking of the significance of the mother in the upbringing of a young child, and two other points come to the fore. Does the true development of independence in the child require the continuous maturation of the mother? How far does the maturation of a woman take place with her acceptance and enjoyment of maternity in the period of life when it occurs?

In Britain, the implications of these questions, which can never be fully solved in the conditions of capitalist society, give rise to emotionally charged controversy, and a state of great confusion and theoretical conflict exists. It was with questions such as these in mind that the writer (who has been carrying on work with very young children both in Great Britain and in Italy for many years) was prompted to visit Moscow in 1963 to observe something of how the day and residential care of infants is approached in the Soviet Union at the present time.

Because these observations are the result of personal experience over a very limited period it seems, after having set out some of the background problems, more appropriate to continue in the first person.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITS

MY OBSERVATIONS were limited almost entirely to the group care of infants up to the age of two years, and I have intentionally used the term 'infants' to emphasise that these children do not yet use speech as an adequate means of communication with adults and that this has particular relation to their vulnerability and to the impact of surroundings upon them. It also meant, happily for me, that my lack of Russian did not hamper my direct observation of these children with whom one makes a contact on a 'pre-verbal' level.

I owe much of the success of my visit to the generous assistance given to me by members of the Soviet Women's Committee, whose help in matters of detailed arrangement of my programme, provision of an excellent interpreter, etc., enabled me to make maximum use of my time in Moscow. To anyone thinking of a similar visit I would stress the importance of very detailed planning of what one wants to see. With the help of the SCR I made contact, some months previous to my visit, with the Institute for the Pre-school Child, and I am particularly grateful to Alexandra Platovna Ussova there for her genuine interest and for the warm welcome accorded to me by her and her colleagues.

I appreciated the help of the Britain-USSR Society in Moscow, particularly with the staff of the Education Section, and it is clear that a very useful exchange of experience could be developed both on the general and the detailed problems of the group care of infants, including such practical things as the design and construction of play material. During my visit it was continually apparent to me that what may be called 'common denominators' which exist in the work going on in Great Britain and the USSR are many.

Throughout I had the great advantage of continuous discussion with Doctor Nina Mikhailovna Askarina, who holds the chair of Pedagogy at the Institute of Refresher Courses for Pediatricians. I valued very much the wisdom and insight which she brings to this work, and the quality and depth of our conversations, which took place actually in the nurseries as the children played, ate and slept, stand out for me as an example of how common interests and common experience can overcome any barriers of language or background when a genuine interest in exchange exists.

Observing and discussing our work in this way meant that one could raise queries on the spot and avoid the misconceptions and misinterpretations which tend to arise everywhere when talking about work with young children.

TYPES OF NURSERIES

THE VARIOUS kinds of nurseries which I visited were the following: a day nursery for children up to the age of three years, located near their homes; a nursery-kindergarten for infants and young children up to the age of seven years, built as part of a complex of residential blocks of flats, including also social facilities, shopping centre, playgrounds, etc.; a residential nursery for children up to three years, mainly for children whose parents for health reasons could not care for them at home, also some whose parents were students. I also visited a residential nursery attached to a pediatric institute. This nursery had more of a hospital atmosphere to it, and had there been time I would have liked to have discussed further with the staff some of the problems involved in the participation of parents in a unit of this kind. I regret not having had the time to visit a factory nursery, though my impression is that the nursery which is located nearer the parents' home and which avoids travelling with the child would be a developing trend in the new neighbourhood housing projects now being built.

From the windows of one nursery I saw many women with young children about in the gardens near the blocks of flats and was told that they were housewives who preferred not to work while their children were very young. Play groups are formed and centres for health and educational work go on round the well-baby clinics. I also heard of play groups run by the mothers under the supervision of a person trained in the guidance of children's play. What struck me so forcefully was the great variety of provision—as varied as the needs of the mothers and children who take part in them. To complete the

picture, I saw, when walking round the streets and parks on one day, five grandmothers and two grandfathers each leading one little child by the hand, or vice versa, and one was sharply reminded that the dividing lines of the generations overlap where the traditions of child care are concerned.

PROBLEMS OF OBSERVING

DURING MY VISITS I became sharply aware of how easily casual visitors to Soviet nurseries could come away with genuine misconceptions. This applies particularly to people coming from Great Britain who may not be familiar with what might be called a Central European tradition of child care. To give a small example—the wearing of white coats by all and sundry and the white-painted cots could give a superficial impression of rigidity and of a hospital régime which I did not find borne out in practice as I watched children and staff throughout many hours of the day. In many small but significant ways this lack of rigidity was apparent—such as the way in which the children got off their chairs to go and play as soon as they had finished eating, without there being any pressure to sit still when they themselves could see no purpose in doing so. In the toilet a young child was never kept sitting on a pot to do what was expected of him when in fact he preferred to be elsewhere at play. I quote these two simple examples which a cursory visit might not have revealed, but which indicate a style of work which is orientated towards the child's interests rather than to a uniformity of behaviour in the group.

By spending time continuously in particular groups, always of children under the age of two years, I was able to observe the skilled way in which the staff caring for a group of infants were deployed in such a way as to allow maximum contact between a member of staff and an individual child aimed at creating a sense of personal relation within the stimulating atmosphere of the group. I was most glad to see the way in which infants were taken from their cots as soon as they wakened, not being left alone and immobile as happens so frequently in English practice. Babies do not wear nappies when kicking and rolling round in the play-pen—nappies are thought to be too constricting to free movement, and little flannelette suits of various colours are worn and changed every time they are wet or soiled. The 'upbringer' when she steps into the play-pen to play with or to pick up a child slips off her shoes for reasons both of safety and hygiene. These are only one or two of the infinitely varied ways in which standards of work can be observed, but it is of small details such as these that an infant's daily life is made up.

PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETING

I WAS very well aware of the problems of misconceptions arising due to actual questions of translation. When I was told that a number of babies aged five to six months would 'now have their music lesson with the pedagogue' I would inevitably have carried away a very different picture had I not actually been present at this 'lesson'. It was, in fact, a wholly delightful interlude where a laughing, gurgling little group of babies were sung to by a charming young girl (who was indeed the pedagogue) who clearly enjoyed singing to these infants as much as they enjoyed responding to her and to the little pipe and tambourine with which she entertained them afterwards. When the arrangement of the babies' day was constantly translated as their 'régime' one can easily see how the unwary can be misled, and this is doubly

true where words concerning early childhood are so emotionally charged. Because I was so struck by the need for care in this question of terminology I have felt it worth making a special comment, for better mutual understanding can so easily be seriously hampered by small points of translation. I was most interested in the successful way that Soviet colleagues had made efforts to find an adequate word to translate our term 'nursery nurse' by referring to her as the 'upbringer'. This word is so exactly right that I have begun to use it in my own work in this country.

ASPECTS OF THE INFANTS' DAILY EXPERIENCE

ONE OF the clearest impressions that remains with me was the quality of the warm relationship which seemed to exist between the staff and each child as his individual needs were attended to. This involvement of the upbringer with the child as he is carried to or from his cot, as he is changed, fed and played with, talked to, laughed with, struck me very much. This way of handling children cannot be dismissed as an expression of 'temperament', as I have seen nurseries in other countries where 'outgoingness' is thought to be a national characteristic but where a formal impersonal approach was predominant in the handling of the children. In fact it is part of a definite attitude which is encouraged that the adult should be warmly interested and responsive to the infant, that they should communicate to a maximum. The constant hum of conversation from the adults to the noticeable lack of crying from the babies was obviously linked to this kind of handling. The problems of the continuity of handling were very much in the minds of those running these nurseries, and so too was the fact that some children just do not enjoy this part of the day away from home and advice is given that other arrangements should be sought for them.

This concern for creating a background of warm relationships for the child lies behind all the kinds of external stimulus which is provided too. Interesting things to see and hear abound in the nursery—play-pens and cots strung with gay ribbons, bells, bright dangling objects, music playtime already described, a bird flies about the room (in his cage only at night), plants, fish, tops that hum, toys for climbing, pulling, pushing and building, on the whole the adult taking an active role, initiating more than would probably be normal practice in an English nursery, where on the whole 'non-interference' tends to become passivity on the part of the adult. There are very many aspects of the Soviet work which could provide us with important fields for discussion, and particularly that of all the attention that is given to the development of the child in the second year of life. The work of Luria and Vigotsky will be well enough known to readers in relation to the significance of speech development in the second year, and a very considerable body of material relating to this age awaits translation. My own feeling is that English and Russian workers in this field have an immense amount of common interest which as yet remains unexplored, and which can be no more than referred to here.

In reading recently C. H. Dobinson's book *Schooling 1963-1970* I was perplexed to read his comments on young Soviet children: '... no one who has seen the pale, listless, docile little inhabitants of these hospital-like institutions can believe that this is a good way to bring up children ...' Mr. Dobinson comments also that 'every pressure, social and economic, is put upon mothers to deposit their children in crèches or kindergartens for the day or even for the five-day working week'. As long as observations of such diversity as his and mine continue to be written about Soviet children it would seem useful for us in our own country to understand each other's standards of observation.

MOTHERS AND NURSERIES

IT WAS only in relation to some of the aspects of the group care of infants that I was able to talk on points of interest about their parents. Lack of time and language prevented me from doing more. Clearly the educational and what might be called supportive aspects of the service are important to mothers, and three points in the present situation struck me as being of considerable interest. The reduction of the women's working day to six hours means that the child need not remain such long hours in the nursery, and the apparent tendency is for mothers to take their maternity leave and annual month's holiday together and in many instances to prolong the time before beginning work again. This means that an infant really begins to 'know' his mother, and for some children their suffering on separation around six months has been noted and is a matter for study and concern. What struck me in the conversations I had on these points was the flexibility with which these matters were approached. I was told: 'At present we have places in nurseries for those children whose mothers are working—we plan to have enough places so that in time every mother who wishes a place for her child may have one', and this approach suggests a structure within which the maximum flexibility will be possible.

In this way the very diverse needs of mothers and their individual children will be able to be met, both the interests and needs of the mother in her own development and the educational and social needs of the growing child. Provisions of this width can clearly provide a structure which is of support and of educational value to parents and calls upon their co-operation, a structure which while providing for normal health and educational needs also deals with the problems arising from, or leading to, breakdown. In discussing the prospects for an extended nursery and maternity and child health service it became clear to me that this is the way in which a genuine prevention of breakdown can be approached. In contrast in Great Britain today we have an insoluble problem—that of the increase of family breakdown, which is dealt with in a fragmented way and where inevitably there develops a tendency to the segregation of breakdown and the emergency nature of the social assistance which goes with this kind of piecemeal help to individuals or families.

When speaking of a supportive service one is clearly thinking of the mental health aspects of such a service too. Two provisions seemed to me to have great importance here in reducing stress and anxiety for the mother of a young child—first, the legal right of the mother to have her job kept open for her for a year after the birth of her child; and second, the provision by which if a child is ill his mother is paid as though she herself were on sick leave and she will return to work only when her child is well enough to return to the nursery. There is no need to stress the mental health implications of this provision, and incidentally for the child the amount of hospitalisation which can be avoided if the sick child is cared for at home by his mother as soon as he shows signs of being unwell. Such a provision shows clearly the acceptance by society of a mother's responsibility for her child and at the same time her right to carry on her own work.

STAFF IN NURSERIES

WHILE NOT attempting to go into problems of staffing in detail I was much interested in the problem of staff turnover, since this is a serious difficulty in our nurseries where children have to adapt themselves to constant changes in handling due to staff changes. One solution in the Soviet nurseries

is the employment, on a large scale, of married women. At one nursery kindergarten designed for 160 children up to the age of seven years I found that thirty of that number were children of the staff who came daily with their mothers. This means that married women who like to work with children find a very satisfactory opening and tend to remain as established members of the staff. Staff training is undertaken at certain selected nurseries, and an extension of training is planned; also, increased rates of pay for this type of work are due to be implemented shortly. I felt that the staffing of the nurseries by more mature women had great advantages.

PERSPECTIVES

THE ONE THING that stands out in observing and discussing Soviet nurseries and the people who work in them is that they are part of a service which it is planned should reach a maximum, and are not regarded as a provision for extreme need only, as is the present position in this country. With this perspective a maximum variety will be possible and a maximum flexibility of use, and such a service will be able to change according to the changing needs of the society of which it is an integral part.

If the work going on in these Soviet nurseries were better known among my colleagues in this field in England, and if they could observe the thought and care which are going into the work which I was able to see in Moscow, I believe that they would be reminded as forcibly as I was, as I watched these children, how much we still have to learn.

AFANASY NIKITIN—RUSSIAN TRAVELLER

Vivien Pixner

‘ . . . Between the Baltic and the Don dwell a number of uncouth races, Ruthenians, Moscovites, Livonians, all once known as Sarmatians. . . .’

(*Vasco da Gama's tale to the King of Malindi, from 'The Lusiads', by Camoens*)

SPEAKING in Leningrad last August, at the council meeting of the European Writers' Community, Leonid Leonov observed: 'Air liners nowadays cover in a few hours distances which Marco Polo and Afanasy Nikitin each took three years and more to travel . . .' Marco Polo, of course, everybody has at least heard of; but who was Afanasy Nikitin?

Nothing at all is known about him, in fact, beyond what he himself wrote in the journal that covered the six years of his wanderings. The story can be told briefly. In the year 1466 he set off down the Volga from his native city of Tver*, travelled through Persia to Hormuz, from there sailed to Chaool in India, lived in India for four years, and in 1472 reached Caffa† on his way home. The journal ends there, but it is known that Afanasy died before reaching Smolensk. His journal was handed over to the *diak* of Moscow—a kind of secretary of state of the Grand Duke—by some merchants, and presumably because of the interest of the subject matter this modest personal record was included in the official chronicles.

In 1821 a Mr. M. P. Struve found a copy of the manuscript in the register of

* Now Kalinin, a town on the upper Volga, north-west of Moscow.

† A Genoese trading settlement and port in Crimea, where the town of Feodosia now stands (cf. *Travels of Marco Polo*).

the cathedral church of St. Sophia in Novgorod, and published it. Some years later the historian N. M. Karamzin found a more complete copy, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, in the archives of the Troitsk-Sergeevsk monastery near Moscow. A translation into English was commissioned by the Hakluyt Society of London, and was made by Count Wielhorsky, secretary of the Russian Legation in London. Although he completed the work before being recalled to Russia on the outbreak of the Crimean War, the translation was not published until 1857, when it appeared in a volume put out by the Hakluyt Society, together with other fifteenth-century accounts of voyages to India. In 1960 a sumptuous edition was issued by the State Publishing House for Geographical Literature in Moscow, containing the text in Afanasy's original Russian, a modern rendering of the same, a translation into Hindi, and a translation into English, together with notes and an afterword dedicated to Indo-Soviet friendship, and a number of beautiful miniature paintings in the 'Palekh' style illustrating incidents described in the journal.

The Troitsk-Sergeevsk codex is now in the Lenin State Library in Moscow. A facsimile copy of this shows it to be a work of forty-eight small pages—about 12,000 words ; that is all.

And yet even in translation the account of the 'wanderings beyond the three seas' makes a powerful impact upon the reader. Afanasy's style is prosaic, even laconic. His descriptions are factual : numbers and amounts, kinds of people and commodities, weather, distances, prices—the sort of information that is always important to merchants of whatever period. On the other hand, there are frequent references to the pangs of conscience from which he suffered as a devout Christian isolated for so long among people of alien creeds. His comments on certain matters were so frank that even after 400 or 500 years his translators have judged it prudent not to render them as he wrote them down.

Count Wielhorsky considered the journal 'quaint and uncouth'. The noted Russian geographer Academician L. Berg called it 'a literary record of world significance . . . among the first in European literature to give a truthful description of India based on personal impressions'.

Although Afanasy himself wrote so little, one may justifiably infer a good deal—without risking a charge of speculation—both from what he did write (and the way he wrote it) and from what he did not write.

The narrative begins with the departure from Tver :

'I set forth down the Volga from the golden-domed Cathedral of the Redeemer with permission from Grand Duke Mihail Borisovich . . .'

There is not a word of any family left behind—of father, mother, sweetheart, wife or child. Nor does he mention the names of any of his companions, the object of his journey, or any personal details. It is clear, however, that he was a merchant and that he had at least a fairly good knowledge of the Tatar language (indispensable for traders). They sailed down the Volga to Nizhny Novgorod with the intention of joining Vasily Papin, who had just been appointed by the Grand Duke Ivan III of Muscovy as his ambassador to the court of Farukh Yasar, Shah of Shirvan. Shirvan was a principality on the western side of the Caspian Sea (now Daghestan and Azerbaijan) with which Ivan had recently established peaceful relations, and Afanasy and his companions were on their way to open up trade in that market. Vasily Papin had left before they arrived, so they waited for Hassan-Bek, the ambassador from the Shah of Shirvan, who was returning home with gifts from Ivan. They would not travel alone because of the danger of attack. The Russian merchants sailed down the Volga in convoy with Hassan-Bek ; but before they reached the sea all their goods had been stolen by hostile Tatars, then their ship was

wrecked on the Caspian shore in a storm and the men on her were taken captive.

Afanasy escaped because he had been travelling in Hassan-Bek's ship. He prevailed on Hassan-Bek to secure his companions' release; but the chief of the tribe who had robbed them would not return their goods.

' . . . we prayed that he would give us the means to return to Rus, but he gave us nothing as we were too many. So we wept and dispersed to wherever each chose to go. Whoever had anything in Rus returned home. Whoever was in debt went where his eyes looked . . . ' *

' As for me, I went . . . across the sea to Chebokhar, where I lived for six months, then I lived at Sar in the Mazanderan country for a month. Then I proceeded to Amul, where I lived for a month, thence to Demavend, and from Demavend to Rai, and from Rai to Kashan, where I stayed for a month; thence to Kain, and from Kain to Yezd, where I also lived for a month. And from Yezd I proceeded to Kirwan, and thence to Tarum, where cattle are fed with dates bought at four altyns a batman; and from Tarum I journeyed to Lar, and from Lar to Bandar, and that is where the harbour of Hormuz is, as well as the Indian Sea. . . . I have not above listed all the cities for there are many more great cities.'

How Afanasy subsisted during this first year of his travels, following this somewhat zigzag course through Persia, and with whom he lived or travelled, he does not say. Evidently he intended to write only a note of the route for reference. However, it appears that by now he had become—at least outwardly—a Persian merchant. From Hormuz he sailed to India, taking with him a stallion to sell there, and after a voyage of six weeks landed at Chaool, south of Bombay. From Chaool he went to Junnair, and was then prevented from going farther by the monsoon, which kept him there for over two months. While staying in Junnair Afanasy noted:

' . . . In the Indian land travellers stay in guest houses, and their food is cooked for them by hostesses, who also make the beds for the guests and sleep with them. If you desire an intimate relationship with one or the other you give her two shetels; if you do not wish to have an intimate relationship you give one shetel: but if she likes you, you can have it for nothing—they love white men.' †

At Junnair, Afanasy nearly suffered catastrophe:

' . . . The Khan took away my horse, and having heard that I was no Mohammedan but a Russian, he said, "I will give thee thy horse and 1,000 pieces of gold if thou wilt embrace our faith, the Mohammedan faith, and if thou wilt not I shall keep the horse and take 1,000 pieces of gold upon thy head." He gave me four days to consider, and all this occurred during the fast of the Assumption of our Lady. . . . On the eve of our Saviour's Day there came a man from Khorassan‡, Khoza Iocha Mahmet, and I implored him to pity me. He repaired to the Khan into the town and, praying him, delivered me from being converted and took from him my horse. . . . And so, my Christian brothers of Rus, those of you

* According to the law, if a merchant could not pay his creditors they were entitled to sell him into serfdom in order to reclaim the debt. Consequently these men were not only destitute so that they could not pay their way back home, but they faced the loss of their freedom if they did return.

† This item of practical information for fifteenth-century merchants has been omitted from the 1960 translation—presumably in the interests of Indian-Soviet friendship—although it appears in both Russian texts.

‡ Khorassan—a region in north-east Iran.

who want to go into the land of India must leave their faith in Rus and invoke Mohammed before setting out for the land of Hindustan. The Mussulman dogs have lied to me, saying that I should find plenty of goods here. But there is nothing for our country. All toll-free goods are for the Moslem land only. Pepper and dyes are cheap. Some carry their goods by sea, others pay no toll for them. But we shall not be allowed to take our goods free of toll. And the toll is high and moreover there are many pirates at sea. . . . ”

After this narrow escape Afanasy lost no time in leaving Junnair, and after a month's journeying he reached Bidar, in the Deccan, a large and important town and a famous market centre. It was the capital of the (Mohammedan) Bahmanid kingdom, which was ruled by a vizir known as Malik-at-Tujjar ('king of the merchants'), a noble of Khorassan. Indeed, the Khorassanis evidently occupied such a pre-eminent position, in the Moslem states at least, that Afanasy noted : ' All the Indian princes come of Khorassan and so do all the boyars.' This may explain why Afanasy was able to live there as long as he did : one may assume that he was accepted by the Persian merchants as one of themselves, even if some of them knew he was a Russian. He evidently spoke Persian well, and if his accent sounded strange—Khorassan was a large territory and there must have been many dialects spoken there. In Bidar Afanasy sold his stallion, having kept him a whole year. He made acquaintance with many Hindus :

' I told them what was my faith, that I was no Mohammedan but a Christian, that my name was Afanasy and my Mohammedan name Khoza Issuf Khorassani. After that they no more endeavoured to conceal anything from me, neither their food nor their commerce nor their prayers nor other things, nor did they try to hide their women ; and I asked them about their religion, and they said : " We believe in Adam . . . " '

As to social conditions, he wrote :

' The land is overstocked with people, but those in the country are very wretched whilst the boyars are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. They are wont to be carried on their silver beds preceded by some twenty chargers caparisoned in gold and followed by 300 men on horseback and 500 on foot and by hornmen, ten torchbearers and ten musicians. The sultan goes out hunting with his mother and his lady and a train of 10,000 men on horseback, 50,000 on foot, 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour and in front 100 hornmen, 100 dancers and 300 common horses in golden clothing, 100 monkeys and 100 concubines, all foreign . . . '*

Afanasy was interested in all religions, and he wrote detailed notes on Hindu beliefs and customs, and about Buddhism. With Hindu companions he made a pilgrimage to Parvat†, ' their Jerusalem or Mecca ' as he described it. The journey to Parvat took a month, the return to Bidar another month.

' From Parvat I came to Bidar a fortnight before Ulubairam, the great Moslem fast. And I know not when Easter Sunday occurs, so I try to guess by signs. . . . And I have forgotten all that I knew of the Christian faith and all the Christian feasts. . . . Surrounded by other faiths I pray to God that he may protect me. . . . And I am going back to Rus thinking that my faith is dead for I have fasted with the Moslems. The month of

* He does not mention whether any game was actually captured or killed on these occasions.

† Parvat—a group of temples on the right bank of the Kistna river, 108 miles south-east of Hyderabad.

March has passed and . . . I have been eating no meat . . . nothing but bread and water. And I have prayed to God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and have invoked none but his name . . .

Afanasy's desire to return home was by now apparently so overwhelming that it outweighed even the apprehension of what might await him there. Perhaps he was afraid of losing his Christian faith, or even his identity as Afanasy, son of Nikita, of Tver. He lamented :

'Oh, true believing Christians ! He that travels through many countries will fall into many sins and deprive himself of the Christian faith . . . four great Lent fastings and four great days (Easter Sunday) have already passed by, but I sinful man do not know which is the great day or when is Lent or Christmas or any other Holyday, or Wednesday or Friday. I have no books ; they were taken by those that plundered us. Driven by this misfortune I went to India for I had nothing to return with to Rus, being robbed of all my goods. . . . The first great day I kept at Kain, the second at Chebokhar in the country of the Mazandaran, the third at Hormuz, the fourth in Bidar in India together with the Mussulmans, and there I wept bitterly because of the Christian faith.'

But he could not leave India, because of war in Persia which made the journey via Hormuz impossible ; and he could not travel via Mecca without becoming a Moslem. He was still under pressure :

'Melik the Moslem pressed me for a long time to adopt the Moslem faith. But I answered him : My lord, you perform your prayers and I perform mine. You say five prayers and I say three. I am a stranger but you are not. But he said to me : Indeed, albeit thou professest not to be a Moslem, neither dost thou know the Christian faith. And I thought it over much, and said to myself : Woe to me, miserable sinner, for I have strayed from the true path, and knowing no other must go my ways . . . I have not forsaken the Christian faith, but God knows what may happen yet . . .'

Even as he made notes of the climate in various countries his thoughts came back to Russia :

' . . . The heat is not strong in Hindustan. It is strong in Hormuz. . . . It is not so strong in Aleppo. And at Sivas* and in the land of Georgia everything is most plentiful. And the Turkish land is very plentiful. Wallachia is plentiful too and all food is cheap there. The land of Podolia too abounds in everything.'

Here he continued in Tatar/Turkish. This was translated by Wielhorsky :

'May God preserve this world and more especially from hell. May he bestow his blessing on the dominions of Russia and the Russian nobility and may the Russian dominions increase.'

whereas the 1960 translation runs :

'God preserve the Russian land. There is no land in the world like it, although the boyars are unjust. May the Russian land be well ordered and may there be justice there.'

The passage continues :

'Ollah, shuda ogod tanri. In thee I trust, O God, save me O Lord. I know not my way. Whither shall I go from Hindustan ? There is fighting everywhere.'

* Sivas—Greek Sebaste, Kizil Irmak, East Asia Minor.

Indeed, Malik-at-Tujjar had set out from Bidar to reduce the Indian (Hindu) kingdom of Vijayanagar, with an army of 50,000 men. After a siege of twenty days the capital fell :

‘And when the town was taken, 20,000 men and women were killed and another 20,000 adults and children were taken captive. They were sold at ten tankas and some at five tankas each, and children two tankas. But no treasure was found.’

At last news of peace came and Afanasy started his journey to the coast, visiting and describing several cities on the way, finally reaching the port of Dabul :

‘I longed to go to Rus . . . and I sailed . . . across the sea for a month, seeing nothing, and it was not until the second month that I sighted the mountains of Ethiopia. Then all those on board exclaimed : “O God, it seems that we are doomed to perish here !” . . . We distributed much rice and pepper and bread among the Ethiopians and they did not plunder the ships. Thence I sailed in twelve days to Muscat, and there kept my sixth Easter.’

Six months later Afanasy reached the port of Trebizond, after a short stay at the camp of Hassan Bek, who was fighting the Turks and had just defeated them at Sivas. Afanasy was suspected of being a spy.

‘At Trebizond the Pasha caused me great harm. He ordered the whole of my luggage to be brought up to his residence on the hill. It was searched especially for writings, as I was coming from the orda of Hassan Bek. . . . They stole all my fine things.’

He embarked on a ship, paying one gold piece for the passage across the Black Sea to Caffa :

‘The wind was fair during the first five days, but having reached Vonada we encountered a heavy northern gale which drove us back to Trebizond. We lay for fifteen days at Platana, the weather continuing very bad, and then we twice attempted to sail and again met with a foul wind that did not permit us to keep the sea. . . . At last by God’s mercy I reached Caffa nine days before the fast of St. Philip [Advent].’

And there the journal ends, with a long paragraph in Tatar beginning : ‘Allah pervodiger, through the mercy of God I have crossed three seas. . . .’ The chronicler remarked only that in the year he obtained the description of Nikitin’s travels (1475) it had been reported that Afanasy Nikitin had died before he reached Smolensk, and that the record of his voyages had been brought to Moscow the same year by some merchants.*

It is particularly interesting to compare Afanasy’s account of his wanderings with that of the travels of Marco Polo, who preceded him by nearly 200 years. To some extent they visited the same places—although, of course, during his twenty-five years of travelling Polo covered a very much greater area and spent less time in India. Afanasy referred to many places—especially from the point of view of the value of their trade—which he did not himself visit : Calicut, Ceylon, Pegu in Burma, and southern China. Polo’s narrative is more discursive, but to a remarkable degree the accounts of both men agree. The chief difference between them, however, is the strong direct impression of

* According to law, if a merchant died while travelling the other members of his party were held responsible for all the possessions he had with him at the time, and were obliged to hand them over to the appropriate authorities ; usually they appointed one man as trustee.

a personality that the reader gets from Nikitin's account and which is absent from Polo's, doubtless because the latter was written not by himself but by a professional writer, and for publication. Despite the two centuries between them, the world was recognisably the same for both : twenty-five years after Afanasy this world was to change for ever, following the arrival in India of Vasco da Gama.

What can one say of Afanasy Nikitin himself ? The picture emerges of a devout Christian, a homesick Russian, who yet was able to live for several years as a Persian among Moslems. He evidently learned Hindu as well as Persian, and was apt to write down in Tatar passages that particularly moved him. He gained the confidence of Moslems and Hindus and Buddhists, and apparently won the affection of women as well as men. It seems sad that in the end he died within 200 miles of Tver, without ever seeing his native town again.

Documents

AIMS AND TASKS OF PARENTS' COMMITTEES

1. The task of educating the new man of communist society now facing the Soviet school can be successfully solved only by close collaboration between the school and the pupils' parents.

2. General school and class parents' committees shall be set up in order to provide constant and close connection between the school and the pupils' parents. In village schools the setting up of class parents' committees may not be possible.

3. The parents' committees of schools and class parents' committees shall be elected in the first quarter of each school year, for a period of one year.

Class parents' committees of three to five people shall be elected at class parents' meetings.

A general parents' meeting shall elect the school parents' committee, whose numbers shall be agreed upon by the meeting and will depend on conditions at the given school. Representatives of the parents of each class shall be included in this committee. By decision of the general meeting of parents the parents' committee may consist of the chairmen of the class parents' committees.

4. The parents' committee of the school shall include the head of the school and a representative of the leading (in secondary schools basic) industrial undertaking, state farm or collective farm, or establishment in the area.

5. To carry out current work and give daily direction of the activities of the class parents' committees and commissions, the parents' committee shall select from among its members :

(a) in large secondary and eight-year schools, a presidium composed of a chairman, one to two deputy chairmen, a secretary, and three to five members ;

(b) in small eight-year schools and primary schools, a chairman, a deputy chairman and a secretary ;

(c) in very small primary schools, a chairman.

6. Standing or temporary commissions may be formed in each school by the parents' committee to include some of its members and interested parents,

to share responsibility for general education, educational propaganda, school tuition, manual training, polytechnical education, vocational training, socially useful labour and mass cultural activities ; also an economic committee, a medical-welfare committee, etc. The number, type, composition and content of the work of such commissions shall be defined by the parents' committee, and will depend on the need for such commissions and the working conditions of the school.

7. In their daily work the school parents' committee and class parents' committees shall establish contact with the parents' committees of house committees, so as to help both school and family in the education and upbringing of children, in the carrying out of general education, in overcoming lack of supervision of children in their free time, and in the organisation and direction of mass educational measures for children.
8. Through its permanent and temporary commissions the school parents' committee may help the school by :
 - (a) checking the general methods of upbringing in pupils' families ; checking up on pupils' homework ; establishing contact between the educational work of the school and that of the family ; involving parents in the leadership of various educational functions, extra-curricular activities, and the work of the Pioneer and Young Communist organisations ;
 - (b) enforcing the law regarding general education through supervising the school attendance of the pupils ; assisting the creation of boarding schools and the provision of normal conditions for their pupils ; organising the supply of hot meals and of daily help in the work of groups and schools with a prolonged day ; co-operation in the creation of a general education fund ;
 - (c) organising the selection of pupils in the ninth to eleventh classes (of secondary schools), taking into account their inclination for a profession ;
 - (d) organising socially useful labour, manual training and the education of the pupils, through their own efforts to provide the necessary material basis ; and encouraging parents to lead various kinds of socially useful labour, self-service, and the socially useful production practice of pupils ;
 - (e) organising vocational training and productive labour of secondary school pupils by involving public enterprises, state farms, collective farms, institutions and the parents of the pupils in creating conditions for vocational training and productive labour, ensuring that the regulations covering safety appliances and industrial hygiene are observed, and that pupils are not overworked ;
 - (f) assisting the development of the older pupils in the fields chosen by them by organising excursions to factories, meetings of pupils and their parents with people of different professions, evening meetings and discussions on the importance of the different branches of Soviet industry and culture, etc. ;
 - (g) organising study of educational problems by parents and others through explanation of the basic requirements for the upbringing of children both in school and in the family ; organising talks and lectures for parents, and conferences for the exchange of family experience ; organising parents' days at the school ;

- (h) supervising children to see that they observe the rules for pupils in school and out ;
 - (i) carrying out plans to strengthen the economic and financial base of the school, for the public welfare of the school, and the establishment of normal sanitary and hygienic conditions in it ;
 - (j) organising ways to improve the children's health ; organising children's holiday activities.
9. Every parents' committee shall draw up a plan of work for six months or a year, bearing in mind local conditions and the aims of the school.
 10. At least one meeting per quarter shall be held by class and school parents' committees to discuss current problems affecting their work. The presidium of the parents' committee of the school shall meet as often as is necessary, but never less than twice in the school quarter.
The parents' committee of the school, its presidium and class parents' committees are empowered to carry out their decisions if not less than two-thirds of their permanent members are present at the meeting.
Chairmen of class parents' committees may attend meetings of the school parents' committee.
 11. Especially important problems of school life and committee work are dealt with at parents' meetings convened by the parents' committees (class meetings not less than four times a year, general school meetings not less than twice a year).
Class teachers must attend class parents' meetings ; heads of schools, class teachers and all other teachers must attend general parents' meetings.
 12. In large schools parents' conferences may be held instead of general parents' meetings, delegates being elected at class parents' meetings.
If a village school serves several remote centres of population it is recommended that a general parents' meeting be held periodically in each of them.
 13. Minutes of parents' committees and parents' meetings shall be kept, which when adopted shall remain in the school files.
All parents' committees shall report periodically to parents' meetings on the carrying out of the decisions earlier taken by them.
 14. School parents' committees shall be accountable for their work to the parents' meeting and class committees to their class parents' meeting.
School parents' committees shall report to their general parents' meetings once a year on the day of election of new members by the parents' committee. Class parents' committees shall report to class parents' meetings on the day of election of new members to the parents' committee and at the beginning of the second half of the school year. On the demand of a majority of the parents additional reports of the parents' committee may be given.
 15. Decisions of the parents' committee taken by its presidium shall be agreed with the head of the school during the course of their adoption but do not require his particular approval.
 16. Differences of opinion on individual questions of work between the head of the school and the majority of the parents' committee shall be resolved at a joint meeting of the pedagogic council and the parents' committee. In case of agreement not being reached, a final decision on the question at issue rests with the director of the District (City) Department of Education.

17. Inspectors of the Department of Education, when inspecting schools, shall acquaint themselves with the work of the school parents' committees and render them the necessary assistance.

II RULES FOR PARENTS' COMMITTEES

18. The parents' committee of a school has the right
- (a) to present to the head and the pedagogic council of the school proposals, giving their reasons, on all questions of school, educational, organisational and economic activities of the school and on improvement of the work of the teaching staff and the parents of pupils. The head of the school and the pedagogic council must carefully examine the proposals of the parents' committee and keep them informed of decisions taken;
 - (b) to hear reports from class parents' committees and to take decisions on the improvement of their work ;
 - (c) to hear communications from individual parents on the methods of family upbringing of the pupils ;
 - (d) to study pupils' home conditions and upbringing ;
 - (e) to praise the best parents for bringing up their children well ; to express disapproval of shortcomings in family upbringing ;
 - (f) periodically to hear reports from the head of the school on the state and prospects of school activities and his explanation of the problems of individual parents ;
 - (g) to convene parents' meetings and conferences ;
 - (h) to take decisions on rendering material assistance to needy pupils ;
 - (i) to encourage parents in various kinds of extra-curricular educational activities, to participate in the leadership of summer production practice, and to give other kinds of help in carrying out the manual and production training of pupils ;
 - (j) to establish relations with Soviet bodies, with public organisations and undertakings that are patrons of the school, state farms, collective farms and establishments, with reference to problems of helping the school to carry out its educational activities and production practice, to the improvement of its educational equipment, and to the attitude of parents toward the upbringing of their children.
19. Class parents' committees have the right : to submit proposals to the class teacher on the improvement of educational activities and the manual and production training of pupils, and on the improvement of activities in association with the parents of the class ; to hear his explanation ; to hear the comments of parents on methods of family upbringing ; to convene class parents' meetings ; to organise the supervisory duty of parents throughout the school.
20. The chairman of the school parents' committee shall be a permanent member of the pedagogic council of the school. Members of the parents' committee may be present at sessions of the pedagogic council at the invitation of the head of the school.
- The chairman of the parents' committee, in addition to sessions of the pedagogic council, may be present at conferences with the head, at production conferences of the local trade union committee, and at regional and city teachers' conferences.

—*Semya shkola*, 1960, No. 11. Translated by J.C.

Book Reviews

A NEW CHEKHOV "SAMPLE-BOOK"

Anton Chekhov—Selected Stories. Trs. Jessie Coulson. (OUP World's Classics No. 599. 12/6.)

IT HAS BEEN said of Chekhov's short stories that if all the infinitely diverse characters portrayed in them were to come alive and pour out into the streets of Moscow even the largest square would not hold them all. The only fairly complete English translation of the stories, made by Constance Garnett at the beginning of this century, fills thirteen volumes. Since then only a few selections have been published in new translations, and these, whatever their merit, represent no more than sample-books of Chekhov's rich patterns. Moreover, a good deal of duplication has tended to shorten the list, with the result that many masterpieces have fallen into oblivion. One must therefore be particularly grateful to Mrs. Coulson for including in her selection a number of her 'personal favourites', which she rightly considers deserve to be better known.

The translation itself is both competent and sensitive and can stand comparison with the best (e.g. S. S. Kotliansky's selection, first published in 1927). Of the few small misunderstandings which, alas, still seem inevitable, only two will puzzle the English reader: the 'pneumatic stoves' (p. 127), which are simply chimneys, and the old Armenian's 'cigar-holder' (p. 22), which is in fact a *chibouk*, or thick straight Turkish pipe. As for some of the others, only those familiar with the true nature of samovars will know that they are neither 'kept going' (p. 22) nor 'extinguished' (p. 124), but once brought to the boil are left to simmer and cool off in their own good time. And despite some dictionaries which omit the double meaning of the term, the garment worn by Belokurov (p. 127, etc.) is neither a jerkin nor a sleeveless under-coat, but the full-skirted, long-sleeved cloth coat worn by merchants and affected by some of the intelligentsia as a 'national' garment.

The changing of some of the titles is a matter of personal taste, but *Butterfly* for *Grasshopper* is hardly an improvement because the original title is a kind of nickname for grasshoppers, containing the idea of erratic jumping. Where a change would have been welcome is in *The Darling*, now that this word has become practically colourless and sexless, for *doeshenka* (literally 'dear little soul') is essentially warm and feminine.

Mrs. Coulson's introduction deserves special appreciation. It is not only well-informed and informative, but has also the

merit of dispelling most efficiently that lingering mist of hopeless melancholy which still conceals from too many eyes the true figure of Chekhov, the man of strong will and purpose whom a cruel gift of deep insight never robbed of his love of people and his firm belief in their future happiness.

TATIANA SHEBUNINA.

DOSTOEVSKY IN LIFE AND LETTERS

Dostoevsky: A Life. David Magarshak. (Secker and Warburg. 512pp. Illus. 35/-.)
Dostoevsky: A Self-Portrait. Jessie Coulson. (OUP. 279pp. Illus. 35/-.)

MR. MAGARSHAK'S *Dostoevsky* is a biography in the manner of Ste. Beuve, a life-story, but also the history of a human conscience of unusual significance. The author tells the story of a man, opening up political and social perspectives as he does so, but interested primarily in the psychological aspect of his study and prepared to make moral judgments. Dostoevsky is the perfect subject for the biographer's art understood in this manner. The fact that he faced a firing squad in a cause which was the cause of all men, and thereafter served four years in a Siberian fortress with fetters on his legs, so wins our sympathy that whatever disapproval or indignation we may feel concerning his subsequent conduct a biographer need have no fear of breaking the bond that binds us to his hero. After the *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, it does not matter how many *louis d'or* Dostoevsky loses at the gaming-table, or how reactionary his opinions become; the reader's affection is sure to be strong enough to carry him as far as *The Brothers Karamazov*, that is to say to the end of the book.

Dostoevsky's distress and anxiety, his terrible need, after the years spent in the prison-house, for reconciliation and harmony, his fear of losing his conscience in material things, his desperate attempts to show the 'utilitarians' that they were wrong, that 'enlightened self-interest' was the same as selfishness, that Catholicism, socialism and the West were all the same, all bad, closed and impervious to goodness, that goodness was all that mattered and was the same as national feelings; and, similarly, the constant 'running' to the gaming-tables, the lack of self-control, the inequalities of temperament, the excitement and the moods—all these things help us to face the paradox of Dostoevsky's greatest creative period, when the masterpieces imposed themselves upon his imagination, full of insults directed against his former friends the reformers, but

how much more damning for the world they would have reformed! Mr. Magarshack's book helps us to come to terms with Dostoevsky and adds to our admiration for the novelist our respect and sympathy for the man.

Mrs. Coulson's *Dostoevsky: a Self-Portrait* is best looked upon as a guide to Dostoevsky's correspondence. It is in effect a translation of selected passages from the letters, with a running commentary. The translation reads easily, but it must be said that Dostoevsky's correspondence is not great literature in itself, whatever be its value for his biographers and editors of his works. It offers the reader little by way of ideas and literary judgments and is always concerned with immediate situations. The commentary is written in rather polite English; it avoids references to the historical setting, except for occasional allusions. The author talks of the 'socialism or even communism' of 1850 (p. 49), and this way of putting the two words together belongs rather to 1950 than to 1850. But one may let it pass; Mrs. Coulson makes no claim to being an historian of ideas. On the other hand there is much carefully exact information on Dostoevsky's day-to-day activities in her book, and it is useful to have to hand such texts as the letter to Pobedonostsev concerning the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

J. S. SPINK.

EISENSTEIN AS THEORIST

Film Form. Essays in Film Theory. Sergei Eisenstein. Ed. and trs. Jay Leyda. (Dobson. 30/-.)

THE PUBLISHING HOUSE of Dobson's just reissued *Film Form*, by Sergei Eisenstein, the late eminent Soviet film director. This book of essays in film theory, the first English edition of which appeared in the United States in 1949, forms part of the International Theatre and Cinema series edited for Dobson's by Herbert Marshall. Jay Leyda edited and translated this collection of essays, and made sure that a correct index was included.

As the years go by Eisenstein's theoretical writing has become even more important than his own filmic masterpieces, which appear to be sketches only for his manifold artistic plans, most of which could not be carried out owing to the Nazi threat and personality cult. The fact remains that so far no other film director has emerged who produced such deep intellectual penetration in cinema art as Eisenstein. Those film critics who state that 'we have had enough of Eisenstein's written stuff' underline only the lamentable attitude to film theory shown by the majority of contemporary film creators.

Our Contributors

Prof. G. Boyadzhiev, D.Litt., holds the chair of Western Drama at the Lunacharsky State Institute of Dramatic Art in Moscow. He is joint author with Dr. A. A. Anikst of a volume of *Stories of the American Theatre*. A similar volume on the British theatre by the same authors is in course of preparation. Professor Boyadzhiev is also vice-president of the Theatre Section of the Union of Soviet Societies for Cultural Relations.

Prof. Igor Belza, Mus.D., a distinguished Soviet critic and composer, is vice-president of the Music Section of the Union of Soviet Societies for Cultural Relations.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko and **Robert Rozhdestvensky** are two of the most popular young poets in the Soviet Union in a period of an amazing burgeoning of poetry.

Deana Levin, chairman of the Education Section of the Society for Cultural Relations, is a teacher of mathematics and the author of several textbooks and of a number of books on Soviet education, including *Children in the Soviet Union* and *Soviet Education Today*. For the past year she has been living in Moscow, studying the school system.

Elinor Goldschmied is an authority on the care of small children in pre-school nurseries and nursery schools, with wide experience of the problems of group care of children in the London area.

Vivien Pixner is a student of Russian living in London.

They produce films as if they were ridden by the Devil, but care not a damn for clarification of the aesthetical and philosophical positions. Their deplorable ignorance explains largely why millions are spent on film work for which Eisenstein would not have given a single kopek. Filmic quality is not a gift granted by the gods.

True, most of his essays are not easy to read. But they are never complicated for originality's sake or for reasons of 'formalism' and 'bourgeois decadence', as alleged during the notorious past when they could not be published because Stalin himself had not published anything on this subject. The essays are the foundation stones of a building of which Bertolt Brecht said: 'It is the simple that is so complicated to achieve.' Brecht, in many ways an equal of Eisenstein, coined this phrase with regard to the entire complexity of communism, but it applies equally to Eisenstein's work, which is based on dialectical materialism.

In a time of peaceful co-existence between different political systems Eisenstein is more than a dead genius. His words are torch flares before a sluggish intelligentsia preferring foul conformism to struggle for progress in art and society everywhere. I am not as pessimistic as the blurb writer who says: 'The world still awaits the intellectual cinema Eisenstein dreamed of.' We are going to get it! The Frenchman Allain Resnais professes that Eisenstein's theory is responsible for his filmic peace appeal *Hiroshima mon Amour!*

Since a British publisher gave the lead in issuing these essays for Europe—and I understand that the publication of Eisenstein's *Collected Works* is planned simultaneously with the Moscow edition—other west and east European countries will follow. This is not just the renaissance of a name or a dead man. It might well be the beginning of a fierce emulation between intellectual concepts so badly needed in our time.

ALEC GUMUCHIAN.

ENGLISH HISTORIES OF RUSSIAN ART

A Concise History of Russian Art. Tamara Talbot Rice. (Thames and Hudson, 288pp. 35/-.)

Russian Painting and Sculpture. Mary Chamot. (Pergamon Press, 55pp. 12/6.)

NO DOUBT the day will arrive when the method of writing histories lampooned a generation ago by two English history masters in their famous *1066 and All That* will disappear for ever not only from our political but also from our art histories. Until then we must look on the bright side and welcome the stop-gap appearance of books dealing, as in this case, with Russian art.

The more ambitious of the two books under review is Mrs. Tamara Talbot Rice's

A Concise History of Russian Art. It contains 251 plates, sixty-two of them in colour, and it not only covers painting and sculpture—as does Miss Mary Chamot's much thinner paper-back *Russian Painting and Sculpture*—but also betrays a praiseworthy ambition to show something of architecture in Russia, both foreign-inspired and native, in the period from the thirteenth until the eighteenth centuries. The book also gives some good examples of indigenous minor arts.

Such a wide diapason makes it the more regrettable that Soviet Russian art is excluded from the work without any explanation or apology, as though Soviet Russians, with their first nearly half-century of art development, were beneath the notice of the author, except for her terse regret in the last sentences of the book that those who had not emigrated after the revolution 'came to conform with the ideology's demand for essentially realistic records of life' and 'because this represents a negation of art . . . it proved sterile'. She holds up Benois, Bakst and Dobushinski, known *décor* and costume designers for Diaghilev's ballet, as disclosing 'new vistas to the rising generation of [Soviet] Russian artists' in every sphere of their art, thus advocating æsthetic decorativeness as a counter to ideas in art. Such detachment from ideology blinds the two authors to the historical significance of Russian icons as a reflection of an age-long yearning for better life under the back-breaking Russian feudalism. From their summit of pure art both authors can hardly see the historical significance of the laicisation of art in the eighteenth century, with the consequence that icons declined and the patronage of art passed from the church to the nobility. Russian Gainsboroughs and Reynoldses, some of them trained serfs, were filling Italian-built palaces with resplendent portraits of the imperial masters of life and of their urban or rural ambience.

The nearer to our times the greater the art-historical myopia of our two authors. By the middle of the last century the Russian Hogarth by the name of Fedotov could depict in his impoverished *Aristocrat's Breakfast* the approaching end of a chapter. After the liberation of the serfs in 1861 a belated industrial revolution had started and the aristocrats were increasingly selling their 'cherry orchards' to the new masters, the capitalist *entrepreneurs*. Miss Chamot laments that 'at a time when great innovations in the visual arts were being developed in France by a generation of pioneers who discovered a new way of seeing, as well as painting, their Russian contemporaries were more concerned with the literary subject matter and sociological impact of their pictures'. She singles out, and she is supported in her opprobrium by her fellow writer, the most democratic movement among Russian painters in the 1870-80s, known as the Wanderers, who, like Daumier and most of his best

contemporary French artists, were deeply anti-capitalist and who were, as she says, 'highly gifted, but the type of painting they practised is now so out of fashion and so seldom seen in the west that it is difficult for us to approach the Russian masters with an unbiased mind', especially as they 'helped to stimulate discontent with the existing order'. That is why she quotes approvingly Benois as saying the 1870-80s were 'the dreariest period in the history of Russian painting'. And while the benighted Soviet Russians continue to be inspired by the greatest genius of this school, Ilya Repin, our author sees in his famous picture with the tragi-comedy of *The Religious Procession in the Kursk Province* towered over by an equestrian tsarist policeman a reminiscence of Frith's *Derby Day*, but in Repin 'there is more atmosphere, suggesting a dusty road on a hot day'. Emasculation is the word.

Mrs. Talbot Rice reproduces in colour the famous *Yellow Quadrilateral on White* by the Petersburgian artist Malevitch (incidentally, a Pole), painted just before the 1917 revolution. It epitomises the decade, the 'golden decade' (Chamot) after the failure of the 1905 revolution, when the faint-hearted intellectuals escaped into the art for art's sake of the Diaghilev group (among them Benois into his beloved Versailles) or, to use an existentialist word, into 'an encounter with nothingness' à la Malevitch, Kandinsky, etc. And when Miss Chamot, unlike Mrs. Talbot Rice, devotes a chapter to 'Soviet Art: 1917-1963' she wishes Soviet Russia a 'cultural return to Europe' and abandonment of the present Soviet 'rehash of the so-called "realism" of the seventies'. When in 1923, shortly after the last foreign interventionists left Soviet Russia, an inspired painter, Yakovlev, produced a picture entitled *Transport Coming Back to Normal*, this, writes Miss Chamot, 'may well have had a deep significance for the people who remembered the post-revolutionary chaos, but for anyone else [?] it is merely a study of smoke and atmosphere as was first attempted by Claude Monet in . . . 1877, who was exciting novelty at the time'. So why care about depicting such trivialities as love, peace, social justice and truth when they are all nothing but 'my eye' and smoke and dust and atmosphere? Commentaries, as they say, are unnecessary.

S. OSIAKOVSKI.

CHANGES IN SOVIET CIVIL LAW

Soviet Civil Legislation and Procedure. (FLPH). 175pp. 5/-. Available from Central Books.)

THIS BOOK is of interest to laymen as well as lawyers. It contains, side by side with valuable commentaries and explanations by Soviet lawyers, the 'fundamental' texts

of most of the civil law—all fields of property, contract, civil wrongs (torts), transport, insurance, copyright and patents, but not family law, marriage and labour law—and deals with court procedure in civil litigation. 'Fundamental' texts are those enacted by the USSR both to operate in its own jurisdictions and to serve as drafts or models for the legislatures of the various constituent republics, which adopt them with such modifications as they think right for their own jurisdictions. (The USSR is a federal union, both the centre, the USSR, and the constituent republics having sovereign rights to legislate. The value of this system of 'fundamental' or basic codes is that, while leaving freedom for necessary variations, it encourages the observance of general principles.)

The plan of the book is simple and good; the actual texts are given verbatim, so that the student knows exactly what he has to deal with, and the full commentaries give explanations which make the book interesting to laymen as well as to lawyers.

The general interest and importance of the book are that one gets a picture of the law as it stands at this stage of the history of the living and changing society in which it lives and which it serves. As that society has begun the transition to the full-scale construction of communist society, the reader gets a view of what the USSR holds to be just and useful for the country today, what rights its citizens and its organisations should have today, and what duties should be laid upon them today. These rights and duties are different from what they were a few years ago, and in a few years' time they will have to be reshaped again to fit the further developments of society.

One or two points worthy of mention come to one's attention as one reads the book: the public is encouraged to take an ever greater part in the administration of justice, the rights of the individual have greater safeguards, and 'socialist legality' is being strengthened. (As far as one can safely describe the institutions of a socialist state by reference to those of a capitalist one, one may say that 'socialist legality' fulfils the functions which the 'rule of law' fulfils or should fulfil under capitalism.)

D. N. PRITT.

TEENAGERS' GUIDE TO EARLY RUSSIA

Finding Out about the Early Russians. Tamara Talbot Rice. (Frederick Muller, 144pp. Illus. 10/6.)

THIS LITTLE VOLUME, designed for young teenagers, deals in its first seventy or so pages with the pre-history of the southern part of European Russia and the steppe area which extends from the Danube valley across to the northern borders of

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China. Only over half-way through the book is the first mention made of the existence of the Russian forest belt. In fact, the author devotes the first half to fascinating information about such subjects as the Scythians and the remarkable finds from the frozen tombs of the Altai. Much space is devoted to the animal style of decoration. No doubt this is one way in which to arouse children's interest in early Russia, provided always that one can take 'Russia' somewhat loosely to mean the USSR. But the book seems to be marred not merely by failure to make clear the distinction between Russia and the Soviet Union in a geographical sense, but also by failing to explain more fully what part was played by the early art in the subsequent development of Russian culture.

The latter half of the book, which deals with the medieval period of Russian history, is marred by several inaccuracies, and fails to stress what is surely one of the main distinguishing features of Russian culture of this period, that it was overwhelmingly a civilisation based on wood. It is this, of course, which has meant that comparatively little has survived from these early times in the archaeological record, so that there is always the temptation to shift one's gaze from the barbarian ancestors of the Great Russians, who inhabited the forests of north-eastern Europe, to the more exciting steppe cultures with their rich and exciting remains of a Bronze Age society.

ROBERT SMITH.

USEFUL FROM TIME TO TIME

Russian-English Dictionary. B. A. Lapidus and S. V. Shevtsova. (Moscow, 1962. 11,000 words approx. 7/6. Available from Collet's.)

English-Russian Dictionary. S. Folomkina and H. Weiser. (Moscow, 1962. 3,500 words approx. 7/6. Available from Collet's.)

WE have here for the first time two Soviet dictionaries specially designed for English-speaking students of Russian. Both are a handy size (6½ in. x 4½ in.), reasonably priced, and full of extremely useful information on paradigms and irregularities. In addition, the first has lists of prefixes and suffixes, explanations as to the use of words given in English, and a long and very interesting article by V. A. Vassilyev on Russian pronunciation and intonation.

The second book has a very good list of verbs, spoilt rather by being neither alphabetical nor categorised.

Each of these dictionaries has a specific aim, and this is where things begin to go wrong. The authors of the *Russian-English Dictionary* claim to have chosen words according to their frequency, with the intention of enabling students to read

contemporary literature and periodicals. But why on earth buy this dictionary of 11,000 words when you can get 25,000 in Akhmanova (same price and size)? A friend of mine who tried to use Lapidus and Shevtsova for the purpose they intended threw it away in disgust after reading a few pages of a novel! Moreover, as an aid to reading, the listing of pronunciation, grammar and irregularities is out of place. Even when judged as a finished work rather than by the authors' intentions, the dictionary falls down in spite of its many useful features. Confining myself to the first twenty pages, I found the following words were not listed: *avtoruchka*, *atletika*, *aeroport*, *belet'* (nor are *zelenet'*, *sinet'*, etc., included), *bespres-tanny*, *besshumny*, *bibliya*, *blagodarny*, *bolel'schik*, *borsch*. Many of these are no doubt obvious; but the dictionary *does* give words like *arkhitektura*, *basketbol*, *barometr*, which are equally or more obvious—and in any case, many of them show irregularities which one needs to know.

Turning to Folomkina and Weiser, I found the position still more disappointing. The authors claim that their dictionary is an aid to oral work, and not for reading (it is not primarily intended for Russian students of English), and state that they have chosen words according to frequency in as wide a range as possible. Starting from the beginning, I found that the following words were omitted: *abandon*, *aeroplane*, *agile*, *alternative*, *anchor*, *anger*, *ankle*, *ant*, *ash(es)*, *athletics*, *attic*, *axe*. Finding that *adopt*, *accomplish* and *ass* were included, I began to wonder just what these principles of word-frequency could be: some, at least, of the words left out seemed to me to be more important than some of those put in. So I made a random investigation and discovered some interesting things. For example, *donkey* is not given (though *ass* is!); *sparrow*, *lark* and *crow* are missing, while *swallow* and *pigeon* are in. This seemed a bit haphazard, so I made a closer check, and found the following not included: *envelope*, *mouse*, *tap*, *loaf*, *jug*, *continual*, *continuous*, *saucer*, *vase*, *gramophone*, *tape recorder*, *squirrel*, *county*, *comma*, *elbow*, *motor-bike*, *melon*, *rocket*, *chat*, *biscuits* . . . I might have gone on for a long while.

The great advantage of Lapidus and Shevtsova is that it lists stress and irregularities; the outstanding merit of Folomkina and Weiser is that it gives only the most current word when an English term can be translated into Russian by a series of synonyms, and that its 3,500 entries are excellently and very fully done.

If you feel you can spend the money you will find them very useful from time to time. But do not expect to be able to use either in the way the authors really intended. P. H. WADDINGTON.

PHYSICS FOR PLEASURE

Physics for Entertainment. Book 2. Y. Perelman, (FLPH, 258pp. Illus. Available from Central Books.)

MR. PERELMAN'S second book follows the same lines as his first, already reviewed in the autumn 1962 number of the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*. Its title, *Physics for Entertainment*, does not seem quite right to me; it suggests parlour tricks and games. Perhaps *Physics of Everyday Life* would be a better one.

At the frontiers of physics today there are large, expensive atom-smashing machines, remote from the experience and out of the mental grasp of the ordinary reader, who therefore thinks of physics as something beyond him. Professor Eric Rogers, of the Nuffield Physics Enterprise, as he travels up and down the country, asks people he meets what they thought of their physics lessons at school. The most common reply, made with pride, is that they did not understand a word of it.

Such an attitude in the second half of the twentieth century bodes no good for the national economy; but we will leave that to look after itself and simply point out that such people are denying themselves—or are being denied—one of life's pleasures: the understanding of the physical world around us. Perelman's books are excellent correctives for those who learned to dislike physics at school. In straightforward language he deals mainly with those sections of physics in which we have direct sense perceptions.

In mechanics he shows that Archimedes was boasting absurdly when he declared that with a long enough lever he could lift the world. Knots and the sewing on of buttons are shown to be subject to physical law. The chapter on rotation connects spinning tops, juggling, and cyclists looping the loop; that on liquids and gases gives Otto von Guericke's own account of his famous experiments with the Magdeburg hemispheres.

In the chapter on heat we learn about keeping warm. The temperature of the air alone does not decide how we feel. An explanation is given for the warm robes and fur hats worn by desert folk in the blazing sun.

The text is enriched by long quotations from the classical writers of scientific fiction—Jules Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, H. G. Wells. Perelman points out the flaw in the latter's otherwise credible invisible man—he would be helpless, for he would pay with blindness for his invisibility.

Physics books tend to avoid the world of animate nature; not so Perelman's. In this book you will read how cuttlefish swim, how inefficient teams of ants are at moving objects, how strong eggshells are to external but not internal pressures, how rabbits see, and why all cats are grey when the candles go out.

One final word of recommendation: those

who have to organise a science exhibition annually will find here plenty of ideas for new, simple, yet striking demonstrations.

J. C. SIDDONS.

TOPICAL ESSAYS

A Guide to Advanced Russian Essay-writing on Topical Themes. Barry Crow. (Harrap.)

THIS IS a book of extracts from Soviet newspapers and journals, arranged under fifteen headings. The subjects are all very much up to date: they include colonialism, television, the colour bar, spivs, and space research. Each passage is followed by a list of phrases and vocabulary appropriate to each subject, and there is then a series of essay topics. The aim is to acquaint an advanced student of Russian with stimulating articles on life in a modern society, so that he may then produce his own idiomatic (as opposed to translated) essays on the subjects which are likely to occur in an examination.

All of this is very clearly presented, and the author's aim is convincingly supported by his choice of texts. I noticed very few misprints, and the vocabulary at the back, though not as complete as it might have been, has been carefully compiled.

I object strongly to Harrap's choice of cover, which is really very ugly, but the book itself is outstandingly good. Every "A" level and university student should have a copy.

P. H. WADDINGTON.

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING SINGING

Voprosy vokal'noi pedagogiki. Sbornik statei pod redaktsiei L. B. Dmitrieva. (Problems of Vocal Teaching. A Symposium. Ed. L. B. Dmitriev. Muzgiz. Moscow. Unpriced.)

PUBLISHED about two years ago in the USSR, *Voprosy vokal'noi pedagogiki* has become a subject for public discussion, whose appearance is welcome.

Whereas practical work on many problems of technology in the USSR is confirmed by scientific data, it has to be acknowledged that a dialectical approach to the technology of the voice does not exist. Teaching in the conservatories at present is in the hands of former opera singers, who teach as they themselves were taught—blindly, empirically, metaphysically rejecting the application of scientific achievements that would undoubtedly help them to understand the complexities they meet in their work.

To defend their orthodox, empirical method, teachers in conservatories in both the west and the east point first of all to their achievements in the technique of opera singers, secondly, they argue that vocal science was unknown in the period of *bel canto*, though outstanding singers were trained then. It is also quite true that these

teachers have the opportunity to teach singers who have come to them through the filter of difficult auditions, with excellent voices, a good sound ear and heart, and the physical appearance that is so important today. But they only listen to the singers, and do not watch them. Some of these singers get on to the stage; why not the majority? And why do the teachers not succeed with the rest?

The argument about the period of *bel canto* is absurd. Singers at that time were chosen in childhood while at school in order to sing in choirs. After they had entered the conservatory the best were again filtered out, and finally only the very best got into opera, where they were taught for the most part by composers and choir-masters, not by vocal teachers.

The cardinal sin of vocal teachers at the present time is not just that they are out-of-date in their approach to the voice, but mainly that they lack a vocal ear and are not able to indicate the best acoustic vocal expression to the singer. To know how to select the best from all the sounds made and to make this choice by reflex action, as is often done in Italy, it is necessary above all to have an ear that has been trained vocally, musically and acoustically. But in the conservatories, where voices are selected, one encounters great opposition to vocal phonetics.

I have personally experienced the difficulties and partial bankruptcy of conservatory teachers when they come to work with pupils who have not been accepted by the conservatories but who wish to sing, and who can sing. When my first article appeared in *Artista Lyrico* in Milan in 1922, and in *Revista Teatrale* in Rome, I was already talking about the phonetic method, though the science of the voice was still in an embryonic state. I was accused of taking bribes from laryngologists in articles by the teachers Cairone, Vanzo and others, and of not knowing that there had been no science of the voice in the last century, when outstanding singers had created the golden age of *bel canto*; and more on the same theme. I replied as every supporter of the vocal phonetic method has had to when arguing with protagonists of old-fashioned orthodox empiricism.

In this symposium on vocal education there is an article by the editor Dmitriev that deserves great attention. It is very important in many respects for a rational theory of singing, but unfortunately it neglects several points of first-class significance for the day-to-day work of teaching practice.

Firstly, it is often useful both for practice and theory to make a diagnosis of the voice by ear, by recording and by eye; and in difficult cases in joint consultation with a competent laryngologist, physiologist or phonetrician. To my great disappointment no contributor to the symposium writes of voice diagnosis, yet they say they want a

general method of phonetic teaching. The data on diagnostic records could easily fulfil their wish for a single method of teaching. In my own half-century of private practice I have always first of all gathered information on the singer's health in childhood and at the time of audition, and made a diagnosis of his voice, ear and memory in general and of his musical memory in particular; of his power of concentration, of his breathing apparatus, and so on. I also make a visual examination of the structure of his phonetic and vocal apparatus—throat, pharynx, nasal cavity and mouth. I have collected about 2,500 such records and these have helped me to solve problems in many difficult cases that teachers in Italy, France and Great Britain have left unanswered.

A second problem, on which Soviet supporters of the phonetic method encounter most opposition from competent teachers of the old-fashioned school, is that of the soft palate—to raise or lower it during phonation. This problem interested us in 1921-4 in the Polyclinic in Rome, when Professors Bilancioni and Carli and myself were occupied with practical work on the physiology of the voice and the dynamics of phonation. We were concerned with problems of nosopharyngeal resonance and the closing and opening of the nosopharynx, problems that were in line for consideration. The cover tone, forming reverberation high in the nasal cavity with an open throat, produced a beautiful tone with an undoubted metallic timbre; on the other hand, a closed nosopharynx, with an excessively raised soft palate and a lowered larynx, produced a tone that was dark and round but not metallic. Significant cases were six singers who were unable to produce a metallic timbre in their voices. Their soft palates were extraordinarily mobile, not fleshy but thin, and easily raised. But they had a *burulet du passavant* protuberance on the rear wall of the pharynx, and the palate rested on the protuberance and hermetically sealed the passage to the nasal cavity ('masked' it, in singers' jargon). Their voices had no metallic quality and remained woolly. We changed the shape of their mouths to a horizontal rather than a vertical opening, more like the shape for 'Eh' than for 'Oh' or 'Ah'. The entrance to the mask was open and the voice was given a metallic vibration. We also made several experiments covering the entrance to the nasal cavity with an artificial membrane, and obtained the same results; the voice was muffled and non-metallic.

When Titta Ruffo, the best baritone of the early part of the century, came to us and sang with reverberation in the voice, he told us: 'The vibration is in mask and I have a feeling of muscular contraction in the movement of the diaphragm. I can raise and lower the larynx, but it is impossible to feel the vibration of the vocal cords and to influence them consciously. I only know that I need

air to vibrate them. During phonation it is easy to lower the larynx at the same time as raising the soft palate, but the narrow opening in the mask never closes. This is the focus of control of my voice.'

Titta Ruffo had a soft palate with medium movement, but fleshy. The soft palate can be trained; it may be raised when tonsillectomy is unsuccessful, and it may be lowered considerably, as it is in singers who have had diphtheria in childhood and in other pathological cases, when the voice acquires an unattractive and irritating nasal quality.

The tenor Giulio Crimi, of the Metropolitan Opera, gave us a similar answer. His soft palate was short, and did not close the passage to the nasal cavity. His voice had exceptional beauty, with a clear metallic timbre.

Recently the French Society for Phoniatrics has supported the myelastic theory on the anatomical basis for classifying voices. This theory maintains that the vibration of the vocal cords is a mechanical phenomenon produced by the pressure of the subglottal air during singing, and dependent on the central nervous system. Tarneau, Landeau, Luban, Perdolini, Lafond and others, including this reviewer, support this theory.

Husson's neurochronoxic basis for phonation, stemming from the neurological 'chronoximetry', explains the vibration of the vocal cords as a number of nervous impulses coming to them from the brain and independent of the force of the breath. A majority of the Society of Phoniatrics oppose Husson's theory, but the controversy on voice classification continues.

The article in the symposium by A. B. Sarkisyan, a teacher, is exceptionally interesting. He writes of the evolution of sound, of the anthropology of speech and singing, and the effect of the objective philosophy of dialectical materialism on problems of singing; and he correctly refers to the vocal hygiene of hearing. I said long ago that the conductor of an orchestra has an instrumental rather than an acoustic-vocal ear. It needs much experience and training of the ear on the best vocal expression to impress it on the memory so as to know how to listen to a singer and analyse his sound, and also, in work on the voice, to indicate the best tone to a pupil. But to speak of a vocal phonetic school with scientific laboratories that do not have the necessary vocal-acoustic ears is absurd. My experience is that the vocal ear of German teachers is better than that of the Dutch, the ear of French teachers better than Danish, and the ear of Italian teachers better than Russian.

An excellent vocal musical ear is needed above all for vocal phonetic teaching. A good teacher has no need to confuse the singer with explanations of masses of pictures of what can be seen on X-ray plates, thanks to tomography. A big dramatic voice cannot be

helped to reach top C, however 'scientifically' the teacher may insist that the vocal cords should be sensitive to the excitation of the hormone of the laryngeal muscles, that strong voices are marked by a secretion of hormones, and that to obtain high C only subglottal breathing of strong pressure is required. Such a pseudo-scientific explanation is absolutely absurd. The singer cannot consciously make changes in the shape of the subglottal cavity or in the vibrating part of the vocal cords, nor can he feel their depth or thickness in their vocal contraction.

As for Manuel Garcia looking, a century ago, at the larynx of a person singing by means of a laryngoscopic mirror, that is not true. In order to look at a person's throat at that time, to see the cords, it was necessary to hold the laryngoscope in one hand and introduce it into the singer's wide-open mouth under the soft palate, and with the other hand to hold his tongue extended. With such manipulation it was possible to see only the vocal cords, the epiglottis and, with deep breathing, the trachea. But to sing, and to draw conclusions about the metallic quality of the voice during singing, was impossible. X-ray photographs, of course, did not then exist.

Anyone acquainted with the work of Husson, Landeau, Tarneau and others, and who reads the journals on phoniatrics, will find Dmitriev's article interesting and useful, but more compilatory than new and original for the west. The studies in the anthropology of speech and singing, the quotations from Engels, and acquaintance with the materialistic physiology of Sechenov and with Pavlov's *Path to Understanding the Mechanics of Reproducing Works*, the transition from sense images through objective thinking to abstract thinking, the material connection between the heard word and the muscles of the vocal apparatus—all are very important for vocal teachers.

It is much simpler and more rational to avoid the metaphysical explanations of the old school and quasi-laboratory erudition about topographical X-ray pictures. These pictures are interesting and useful to the teacher, but in practice the pedagogue should not play with the explanations of experimental phonetics, which are meaningless to pupils. The teacher must base his explanations on the shape of the mouth in the five Italian vowels, paying attention to the individual peculiarities of the pupil. He must arrange work before a mirror, listen, with a well-trained vocal ear, to the singer, counsel him, know the shape of his mouth during phonation, and always insist on the best sound. The pupil sees, listens, and analyses the sensation of correct and incorrect sounds, for which only the ear of the teacher is responsible through repeated listening and correction.

Countries that have taken the road of

technological and social development later than others are surging forward with meteoric speed from ignorance to knowledge. In the process of building communism Soviet technology is overtaking western countries. In singing it has only just woken up, but at least it is no longer sleeping.

I found nothing in the symposium on the singer's hygiene, but this is of essential importance. I would like singers to have the standards of the athlete training for a match, and to be as organised for every lesson.

In Sarkisyan's article on certain problems of vocal art, a mistake about Caruso's breathing technique has crept in: that he used chest breathing. Caruso was famous for the strength of his diaphragm; he often boasted of moving a concert grand piano away from him by hitting it with his diaphragm; or lying on a mat he would raise his best friend, the heavyweight baritone Scotti, by movements of his iron diaphragm.

Much has been written and spoken about breathing, from Lamberti to our own day, and it is often mistakenly believed that singing is needed for breathing and not regulated breathing for singing.

I. M. Matt-Zabotina writes on the interpretation of vocal music. She quite correctly advises opera and concert singers to ascertain the image being presented, which is closely linked with the words to be pronounced and with the creation of an artistically expressive musical idea. It is clear that

her method of approach to vocal art draws on the heritage of Stanislavsky's method. She suggests that insufficient attention is paid to this side of the training of a singer as a performer. With that I do not agree. I think that Stanislavsky's method of image formation in singing is often given priority in the USSR over all-round development of the singer's voice. But I do agree that the remarkable Stanislavsky method of feeling and thinking out the presentation of an image gives the artist confidence in opera and on the concert platform and frees the singer from fear of the footlights.

G. CUNELLI.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Learn to Interpret by Interpreting. G. G. Yudina. 3/6.

The Laws of Social Development. G. Glezerman. (FLPH. 3/-)

Social Security in the USSR. V. Aralov; A. Levshin. (FLPH. 1/-)

Elementary Scientific Russian Reader. G. A. Znamensky. (Pitman.)

Antarctica Aho! Juhan Smull. (FLPH.)

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